



Contents

RESEARCH ARTICLES

The Notion of Islam as “Heresy” in Peter the Venerable’s Writings in the Historical Frame of the Conflict between Christianity and Islam

in the Middle Age

Sabrina Lei

Did Fuat Sezgin challenge Orientalism? An Evaluation on the basis of his “Science and Technology in Islam”

Muammer İskenderoğlu

The Concept of Civil State in the Framework of Islamic Juridical Tradition: Introductory Remarks

Jasser Auda

Early Childhood Education: An Islamic Perspective in the Light of Iqbal’s Philosophy of Education

Amina Murad, Muhammad Abid Ali, Sabahat Anwar

Muhammad Iqbal e La ricostruzione del pensiero religioso nell’Islam

Abdel Latif Chalikandi

La strategia governativa nell’Islam come processo di riforma e di rinnovamento

Basma I. Abdelgafar

BOOK REVIEWS

Süleyman Uludağ. İbn Teymiye: Ezber Bozan Bir İlim ve Fikir Adamı.

Emrah Kaya

Massimo Campanini. Dante e l’Islam: L’Empireo delle Luci

Gianni F. Trapletti

Alaa al-Din Arafat. The Fall of Islamism and the Prospects of Democratization

Muammer İskenderoğlu

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Contents

RESEARCH ARTICLES

The Notion of Islam as “Heresy” in Peter the Venerable’s Writings in the Historical Frame of the Conflict between Christianity and Islam in the Middle Age.....	
Sabrina Lei	1-33
Did Fuat Sezgin challenge Orientalism? An Evaluation on the basis of his “Science and Technology in Islam”	
Muammer İskenderoğlu	33-45
The Concept of Civil State in the Framework of Islamic Juridical Tradition: Introductory Remarks	
Jasser Auda	46-67
Early Childhood Education: An Islamic Perspective in the Light of Iqbal’s Philosophy of Education	
Amina Murad, Muhammad Abid Ali, Sabahat Anwar	68-93
Muhammad Iqbal e La ricostruzione del pensiero religioso nell’Islam	
Abdel Latif Chalikandi.....	94-103
La strategia governativa nell’Islam come processo di riforma e di rinnovamento.....	
Basma I. Abdelgafar.....	104-128

BOOK REVIEWS

Süleyman Uludağ. İbn Teymiye: Ezber Bozan Bir İlim ve Fikir Adamı.	
Emrah Kaya.....	129-134
Massimo Campanini. Dante e l’Islam: L’Empireo delle Luci	
Gianni F. Trapletti	135-142
Alaa al-Din Arafat. The Fall of Islamism and the Prospects of Democratization	
Muammer İskenderoğlu	143-149

The notion of Islam as “Heresy” in Peter the Venerable’s Writings in the Historical Frame of the Conflict between Christianity and Islam in the Middle Age

Sabrina Lei

Abstract

Peter the Venerable’s apologetic writings against Islam did not constitute a problematic document, as some scholars seem to suggest, related to a new style of approach to the Muslim world intended both as separate and opposite to the strictly military one, but could be instead interpreted as an ideological justification of a kind of “intellectual crusade” conducted by the clergy and rooted, according to the intention of the Abbot of Cluny, on a supposed “objective” knowledge of Islam. The composition of these texts is situated in the general frame of the Reconquista (722-1492) of the territories under the Islamic power by the Christian armies, having been written at the core of this historical process. Although some passages seem to manifest a wider pastoral interest, as addressed to the Muslim world as such, however a careful reading of the texts suggests a different interpretation. Actually, the writings of Peter the Venerable should be understood as a programmatic intellectual project aiming at the conversion of Muslims living in the territories reconquered by the Christian monarchs and, at the same time, at preserving the Christian populations from converting to Islam. The texts’ ideologi-

cal frame is rooted in the notion of Islam as an “heresy” which, beyond a strict theological perspective, define the ideological asset of the Catholic Church in the midst of the struggle for the spiritual and consequentially political supremacy of the Christian world after the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the idea of Latinitas Cristiana, at the core of the notion of Europe as a singular political reality, as intended and promoted by the Papacy.

Keywords: Peter the Venerable, Crusaders, Reconquista, History of Christianity, Quran’ Latin translation.

Towards the end of the first half of the XII century, Peter the Venerable¹, then Abbot of the monastery of Cluny, therefore at its pick of influence in the Christian world due to its relation with Papacy and the strong bonds with the European monarchs, started writing two documents entitled *Summa totius haeresis saracenorum* (On the whole heresy of the Saracens) and *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim saracenorum* (Against the Heretic Sect of the Saracens), respectively.

However, the importance of the writings of Peter the Venerable does not lie strictly in their theological value, which from a contemporary approach appears quite super-

¹Aka Pierre Maurice de Montboissier (1092-1156), from a prominent family and grandnephew of Hugh I, Abbot of Cluny from 1049 to 1109, become Abbot at the young age of twenty-eight. He started his education in the monastery of Sauxillanges. After having served as prior in the monasteries of Vézelay and Domène, was elected as Abbot of Cluny, a role he covered until his death. The Abbey of Cluny, a French location between Lion and Dion, played a very prominent role in the cultural and political life of the time, especially in the period between the beginning of X and the second half of the XII century. The Abbey has been founded in 910 by William of Aquitania, but it reached its peak between the XI and the beginning of XII century. James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 3-14.

ficial due to the lack of an objective and adequate knowledge of Islam as a religion and civilization. From another perspective, instead, the scholar could find the same texts extremely interesting since they clearly illustrate the kind and nature of the knowledge Christian theologians had of Islam in the Middle Age and, at the same time, represent a fundamental document for studying the main features of Medieval Christianity in the process of the political construction of European identity with regard to the Muslim world.

In fact, even if Peter the Venerable’s work could be situated among the Christian apology from a strictly theological perspective, at the same time, it could be studied and interpreted also as a direct evidence emerging from the medieval political and social environment, in relation to the conflict between Christianity and Islamic world in the historical frame of the Crusades and the *Reconquista*. These texts testified, in fact, the existence of a paradigm regarding the relation between Christianity and heresy, which is situated at the core of the ongoing process of the construction of European identity, where both political and religious powers were in the constant research of a balance from the sides of internal and foreign policy, respectively.

However, in order to understand these documents as a whole it is necessary, even before studying them in the detail, to provide an answer to the following key issues: the historical context of their composition and their scope. The value of these writings could be understood from both the theological and historical perspectives only taking all these factors into the due consideration.

Historically, the *terminus post quem* of the work is 1142-1143, a timeframe in which are located two important moments of the relation between Christian and Islamic world. At the end of the XI century, in fact, the

Islamic and Christian civilizations were engaged in the middle of a conflict in several parts of the world: in south Italy, in Andalusia, Anatolia and the Holy Land. Generally speaking, the Christian world was actively engaged in warfare with the Muslim world to regain the territories previously lost to the Islamic power.

In the 1142 Peter the Venerable travelled to Spain² in order to look after some interests of the local Christian community, to promote the Liturgical reform³ aiming at unifying the religious practises of the local churches and to encounter the monarch Alphonso VII, with whom the Cluniac order shared a very a close relation and who invited him to discuss several issues related also to the economic situation of Cluny. Alphonso VI, in fact, conceded to the Abbey of Cluny a considerable donation, which was of vital importance for the Abbey. At the time of Alphonso VII, however, the same donation suffers several delays, and the Abbot of Cluny tried to solve the issue for the general interest of the Cluniac order and to strengthen, at the same time, the relation with the victorious monarch. Alphonso VII, in fact, in the 1085 re-conquered from the Muslim power the city of Toledo, where the ecclesiastical authorities established an archbishopric and as an archbishop was chosen by the Pope Urban II precisely a monk from the Cluniac order.

²Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 3-15; Charles Julian Bishko, “Peter the Venerable’s Journey to Spain”, *Spanish and Portuguese Monastic History* Pt. 12, ed. Charles Julian Bishko, (London: Variorum Reprint, 1984), 163-175.

³The standardization of the liturgy was promoted and patronized by the Cluniac order and, as regard the Christian community residing in Spanish territories was aimed mainly at the “correction” of the liturgical and worship practices of the Mozarab Christians who, for centuries, lived under the Muslim political power. The liturgical practises of the Mozarabs have been finally abolished in 1080, during the Council of Burgos. The representatives of the Cluniac order actually introduced the Roman rite among the Christians of Spain.

The monasteries of the Cluniac order, which Peter was going to visit and where he intended to stay during his visit to Spain, were located in the Eber valley, in the strip of land between the Pyrenees and the homonymous river. This area, during the XII century, had been a place of encounter and warfare between the Muslim and Christian powers. Here, in fact, for almost three centuries, the Muslim and Christian armies confronted each other on the battlefield. While in Spanish territory, the Abbot of Cluny had the chance of experiencing directly the danger posed for Christians by Islam that won a large number of converts from the Catholic Church as the history of Andalusia of that time clearly demonstrates⁴ According to some historians, in fact, in the X century the majority of the Christians of Andalusia converted to Islam. Part of them become client or affiliate of the Arab tribes and families. However, the majority of converts, who did not enjoy any bond with the Arab families, were known as *muwalladun* and constitute, according to some scholars,⁵ a separate social group which did not fall in any category previously known in the Islamic world. Catholicism, instead, continued to be professed in the main cities and the surrounding areas, where there was an Episcopal chair, while Christian communities seem to have been disappeared in the Eastern and central parts of Andalusia and in the Eber valley mainly due to the lack of pastoral care and the

⁴Mikel de Epalza, “Falta de obispos y conversion al Islam de los cristianos de al-Andalus”, *al-Qantara* 15 (1994), 385-400; Richard William Bulliet, “Conversion stories in Early Islam”, *Conversion and Continuity: indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands, eight to eighteenth centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers-Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical institute of medieval studies, 1990), 123-133; David Wasserstein, “Where have all the converts gone? Difficulties in the study of conversion to Islam in al-Andalus”, *al-Qantara* 23, (2012), 325-342.

⁵It seems that the term “muwalla” has been used only in Andalusia.

subsequent conversion to Islam. In the same area, after the victory of Christian armies, began also the process of study and progressive transmission of the technical and scientific heritage of the Islamic civilization preserved in the rich libraries, where were stored and in custody not only the works written in Andalusia but also those composed in the rest of the Muslim world.⁶

The process of transmission of the Islamic knowledge to the Christian world was promoted and fostered by the attentive and tireless work of translators -very often of Jewish or Mozarab⁷ origin- who engaged themselves actively in the transmission of the Arabic texts in the Latin language. In the city of Toledo, between 1125 and 1151, the archbishop Raymond founded a school of translation, which has been converted in 1250 by the Dominican Fathers into a Centre of Oriental Studies, the first one founded in the West.

The main books chosen to be translated were the ones related to philosophy, science and of technical nature. Instead, the texts related to Islam as a faith, from both the theological and juridical perspectives, did not receive the same attention. Peter the Venerable, during his permanence in Spain, surely witnessed this hectic literary activity and, may be noticing the poor attention reserved to the foundational texts of the Islamic civilization, decided to sponsor a project which he considered of great significance in the process of confrontation with the Muslim

⁶Gabriella Braga, “Le prefazioni alle traduzioni dall’arabo nella Spagna del XII secolo: la valle dell’Ebro”, *Atti del Convegno: La diffusione delle scienze islamiche nel medio evo europeo* (Roma, 1987), 323-354; Juan Vernet, “El valle del Ebro como nexo entre Oriente y Occidente”, *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 23 (1850), 249-286.

⁷Mikel de Epalza, “Mozarabs: an emblematic Christian minority”, *The Legacy of Muslim Spain, Handbook of Oriental Studies*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi-Manuela Marin, The Near and Middle East, 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

world, namely the translation in Latin language of a corpus of texts related to the Quran and the life of Prophet Muhammad. The Abbot describes the events leading to this choice in the Prologue of the *Liber contra sectam* as follows:

“This is the reason why I contacted some scholars of expertise in Arabic language, from which that *mortal poison* infected half of the world. Then I persuaded them both with prayers and a conspicuous price to translate in Latin the origin, the life, and the doctrine of that man and the law of Alchoran. And, in order to avoid any defect in the translation and that through a fraud something could be took away from our knowledge, I added a Saracen to the Christian translators. The Christian translators are Robert of Ketton, Hermann of Dalmatia, Peter of Toledo, while the name of the Saracen is Mahumeth. Those who search attentively in the libraries of this *barbaric people*⁸ published for the Latin readers a volume far from being small on this subject. This happened in the same year, namely 1141, I travelled to Spain and I got a conversation with Alfonso, the victorious emperor of Spain”.⁹

⁸Italics are mine.

⁹The original Latin text here translated is preserved in the MS 1162 of the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in Paris (A) and MS 381 of the Bibliothèque municipale of Douai (D). The Latin transcription is by Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 203-291. D 180rd-D 180v: “Contuli ergo me ad peritos linguae Arabicae, ex qua procedens mortiferum virus orbem plusquam dimidium infecit. Eis ad transferendum de lingua Arabica in Latinam perditum hominis originem, vitam, doctrinam, legemque ipsamque Alchoran vocatur tam prece quam precio persuasi. Et ut translationi fides plenissima non deesset, nec quicquam fraude aliqua nostrorum notitiae subtrahi posset, Christianis interpretibus etiam Saracenum adiunxi. Christianorum interpretum nomina, Robertus Ketenensis, Armannus Dalmata, Petrus Toletanus, Sarraceni Mahumeth nomen erat. Qui intima ipsa barbarae gentis armaria perscrutantes, volumen non parvum ex praedicta materia Latinis lectoribus ediderunt. Hoc anno illo factum est quo Hispanias adii, et cum domno Adelfonso victorioso Hys-

While residing in Spain, Peter the Venerable engaged actively in searching of a group of scholars specialized in the Arabic language in order to commission the translation of a set of texts which later became part of the so called *Collectio Toledana*. This collection of writings related to the Islamic doctrine and the life of Prophet Muhammad, included the following documents: the *Fabulae Saracenorum* (The History of Muslims)¹⁰ translated by Robert of Ketton, the *Liber generationis Mahumet* (The book of the birth of Muhammad),¹¹ the *Doctrina Mahumet* (The teachings of Muhammad)¹² translated both by Hermann of Dalmatia, the *Lex Mahumet Pseudoprophetae* (The Law of Muhammad the Pseudo Prophet) translated by Robert of Ketton and the *Epistula saraceni et rescriptum cristiani* (The Letter of a Muslim and the Christian Answer)¹³ translated by Peter of Toledo and

paniarum imperatore colloquium habui. Qui annus fuit ab incarnatione Domini, m.c.xli.us”.

¹⁰Unfortunately, the scholars could not identify and locate the original Arabic text of this translation. The main difficulty seems to be related to the fact that Robert of Ketton deleted every reference to the authorship of the text in his translation. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 75-76.

¹¹According to a note from Hermann of Dalmatia, the original Arabic text of this translation was entitled *Kitāb Nasab Rasūl Allāh* attributed to both Ka‘ b al-Ahbār and Sa‘īd ibn ‘Umar recalled at the text’s beginning and end, respectively. Julian Ribera-Miguel Palacios Asin, *Manuscritos Arabes y Aljamiados de la Biblioteca de la Junta* (Madrid: Hardpress Publishing, 1912), 44, 50.

¹²The original Arabic text is *Masā’il ‘Abdillāh ibn-Salām*, reported in several manuscripts under different titles. The original Arabic text received little if not scarce attention from the scholars. Guillaume Frédéric Pijper, *Het boek der duizend vragen* (Leiden: Brill, 1924) review by James Horowitz, *Der Islam* 16 (1927), 296-98.

¹³This is a translation from the Arabic *Risālat ‘Abdillāh ibn-Isma‘īl al-Hāshimī ila ‘Abd-al-Masih ibn-Ishāq al-Kindi wa-Risālat al-Kindi ila al-Hāshimī*. Henry Preserved Smith, “Moslem and Christian Polemic”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45 (1926), 243-45. Erdmann Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter* (Breslau:

Peter de Poitiers. Inside the *Collectio*, the most remarkable documents for the scholars interested in the evolution of the knowledge of Islam in the Medieval Latin world, are most probably represented by the *Doctrina Mahumet* and the *Lex Mahumet Pseudopropheta*. The latter, in fact, represents the first Latin translation of the Quranic text authored by Robert of Ketton, an ecclesiastic of English origin who was in Toledo busy in the translation of the scientific works of the Arabs.¹⁴ According to the Abbot of Cluny, Robert of Ketton, at the beginning, was not much enthusiastic of the work, but was convinced to pursue the engagement by the alluring proposal of a conspicuous pecuniary retribution, as Peter the Venerable clearly writes in the Letter sent to Bernard of Clairvaux.

“... I commissioned the translation from Arabic to Latin to two scholars expert in both languages, the English Robert of Ketton, who now is Archideacon of the Church of Pamplona and Hermann of Dalmatia, a scholar of great talent, who I found focused on studying astronomy in Span and persuaded them with an high expenses to undertake this endeavour”.¹⁵

Inktank Publishing, 1930); Paul Kraus, “Beitrage zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte”, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 14 (1933), 335-41; Costanza Farina - Carmela Ciaramella, “Per un’edizione critica della apologia di Al-Kindi”, *Orientalia christiana analecta* 218 (1982), 193-206.

¹⁴To Robert of Ketton is actually due the *Liber algebræ et almucabola*, the Latin transition of Khwarazmi’s *al-Kitāb al-mukhtasar fī isāb al-jabr wa-l-muqābala*.

¹⁵*Epistola Petri Cluniacensis ad Bernardum Claraevallis* (The letter of Peter the Venerable to Bernard of Clairvaux), A 4rs: “... nichilominus ex Arabico ad Latinitatem perduxī, interpretantibus scilicet viris utriusque linguae peritis, Rotberto Ketenensi de Anglia, qui nunc Pamplilonensis ecclesiae archidiaconus est, Hermannō quoque Dalmata, acutissimi et litterati ingenii scolastico, qui in Hispania circa Hiberum astrologicae arti studentes inveni, eosque ad hoc faciendum multo precio conduxit”.

The first Latin translation of the Quran has been interpreted in an ambivalent way by Latinists. From one side, it has been underlined its inadequacy both at the linguistic and content levels, since the Arabic text has been arbitrarily deconstructed and recomposed through the division of the Suras and the removal of some verses.¹⁶ Consequently, as a whole, the translation of Robert Ketton should be considered both inadequate and misleading. Others, instead, without questioning the presence of omissions and misconceptions in the Latin translation of the Arabic text, however underlined at the same time that, notwithstanding its several and severe defects and mistakes, the translator showed a deep knowledge of the commentaries to the Quranic text in the case of the interpretation of some specific verses.¹⁷ Actually, both the perspectives only under determinate but incomplete point of view seem to be quite adequate, since the Latin translation of the Quran has been studied and examined only from the linguistic and stylistic perspectives. The analysis of the text did not cover, in fact, a deep study related to the preconceptions which actually influenced the translation, and at the same time the way the Latin world, and first of all the Abbot of Cluny, benefitted from the translation and how it influenced, at a general level, the Christian knowledge and interpretation of Islam.

Through the translation of the Sacred Book of Islam, the Medieval Christian world tried to appropriate its founding text, interpreting it according to the Catholic orthodoxy. From this point of view, the first Latin translation of the Quran could be considered the first ideological step,

¹⁶Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 36-88.

¹⁷Thomas E. Burman, “Tafsīr and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qur'an Exegesis and the Latin Qur'ans of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo”, *Speculum* 73 (1998), 703-732.

which ran parallel to the military one, towards the “Reconquista” of what seems to belong rightfully to Christianity. The critical apparatus of the glosses to the medieval text of the Quran, in fact, aims at leading the reader through the interpretation of a heretic text, whose doctrinal mistakes should be at the same time individuated, catalogued and in the end emended by the legitimate representatives, interpreters and custodian of orthodoxy.¹⁸ In this perspective, the knowledge of Islam does not assume a neutral role in the proposal of a dialogue between civilizations, but could instead be interpreted as a means of control and assimilation.¹⁹

At that particular historical time, the Latin-Christian world from one side was highly engaged in the project of assimilation of the Muslim intellectual conquests, which later would have constituted the roots of Renaissance and, at the same time, from another pursued a systematic work of deconstruction and deletion of Islam both as a revelation and as a distinct and independent civilization. Instead, the germs of the cultural, scientific and intellectual conquests of the Muslims have been introduced in

¹⁸The original Arabic text of the Quran in the Latin translation by Robert of Ketton is actually deprived of its own internal coherence and semantic relations, in order to transform it into a heretic text, deleting its own independent and original message.

¹⁹Robert of Ketton himself in the *Epistula* preceding the translation of the Quranic text expressed fully this perspective, when he wrote: “Lapides igitur et ligna ut tuum deinde pulcherrimum et commodissimum edificium coagmentum et indissolubile fugat, nil excerptens, nil sensibiiter nisi propter intelligentiam tantum alterans, attuli, Machometique fumum, ad ipsus tuis folliibus extinctum... patefeci”. English translation by Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 65: “Selecting nothing, altering nothing in the sense except for the sake of intelligibility, I have brought stones and wood so that your beautiful building may hereafter be raised up all joined together and imperishable. I have uncovered Mahumeth’s smoke so that it may be extinguished by your bellows”. Latin manuscript Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 3390, 28rd; BC 1116B.

the Christian world by the clerics and the Churchmen, and this same rich heritage, after centuries, would lead to the questioning of the Catholic Church attempts and claims in relation to the spiritual supremacy of Europe.

Peter the Venerable intended to write an apologetic work aiming at the elaboration of a theoretical apparatus for theoretical confutation of the Islamic theological concepts. The work of the Abbot of Cluny has got a duplex feature. From one perspective, in fact, it constitutes a new and original project in the framework of Medieval Christianity, which seems to have not nurtured any serious interest towards the nature of the Islamic revelation, of the content of the Quranic text and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad beyond the simple propaganda. In the Prologue to the *Liber contra secta sive haeresim sarracenorum*, Peter the Venerable clearly states:

“I was indignant that the Latins did not know the cause of such perdition and, by that ignorance, could not be moved up any resistance; for there was no one who replied [to Islam] because there was simply no one who knew [about it]”.²⁰

Peter the Venerable’s attitude seems to be quite unusual and original, when compared to the general disposition of his contemporaries as, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux,²¹ who instead was a passionate supporter of the military intervention in the Muslim world, and did not seem to have never taken into consideration -at least as much as concerns the available historical recordings-

²⁰D 180rd: “Indignatus sum casusam tantae perditionis Latinos ignorare, et ipsa ignorantia nullum ad resistendum posse animari. Nam non erat qui responderet, quia non erat qui agnosceret”. English translation by Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 30.

²¹Adriaan Hendrik Bredero, “The controversy between Peter the Venerable and St. Bernard of Clairvaux”, *Cistercians and Cluniacs*, ed. David Knowles, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955).

the need of a dialogue which, in contemporary words, is indeed quite inappropriate for that particular historical time, could be defined as “interreligious” and distinct from the armed confrontation. According to Kritzeck, in fact, Peter the Venerable was in Toledo and actively planning to write his apologetic works against Islam, while Bernard was highly engaged in the preaching of the second crusade (1145-1149) according to an order received from Pope Innocent II (1130-1143), although the actual crusade was carried on by Pope Eugene III (1145-1153). Notwithstanding the differences between the two representatives of the Catholicism of that time, Peter tried to involve Bernard in his intellectual work about Islam, as testified by the *Epistola de translatione sua* (The Letter on the Translation) sent to the Abbot of Clairvaux, in which the Abbot of Cluny clearly states:

“If Your Reverence would engage in this work trying to get close to God -since the faculty for His Grace did not lack- write us and we will send you the book, which still we did not send, in order that, through your mouth full of His Praises, to the spirit of indolence could answer the kind spirit, replenishing the Church with the grace of your wisdom and knowledge”.²²

However, the Abbot of Clairvaux did not answer to the letter and did not show any interest in Peter’s intellectual and theological project. Most probably, this behaviour should be interpreted as a further instance of the different characters of the two Abbots and the wide disparity be-

²²*Epistola Petri Cluniacensis ad Bernardum Claraevallis*, MS 1162 Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal (Paris) A 4vd: “Si igitur reverentiae vestrae in his laborandi Deo aspirante voluntas fuerit, nam facultas per eius gratiam deesse non poterit, re/scribite, et mittemus librum quem nondum misimus, ut per os vestrum ipsius laude repletum, spiritui nequitiae “Spiritus benignus” respondeat, et ecclesiae suae thesaurus gratiae vestrae sapientiae suppleat”.

tween perspectives on several key issues, both at spiritual and political levels, which lead them to assume antithetical views on many matters.

Maybe focusing excessively on the difference between the Abbots of Cluny and of Clairvaux’ attitudes, respectively, some scholars interpreted Peter the Venerable’s theological work against Islam as an indirect evidence of a hidden criticism and rejection of the same notion of “crusade”.²³ Although the study of the conceptions of the Abbot of Cluny about the necessity of the Crusades and the relation between Christianity and violence in the Medieval time are beyond this study and it has been subjected to several discussions among the scholars,²⁴ however it is equally important to consider, albeit briefly, this topic with respect to the present research.

The relation between Christian ethics and violence had been for a long time at the centre of a fierce debate among the medieval thinkers, with a particular attention given to the role of the clergy in case of conflict. The answer to this dilemma was closely related to the role of the Church in the then fledgling social and political structure of Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire and the consequent end of the *pax romana*. In relation to the notion of “meritorious violence”, which has been elaborated at the beginning of the Crusaders, the Catholic Church dedicated several councils starting from the Council of Clermont in 1095 and later in 1123 and 1245, on the occasion the Lateran Council I and the Council of Lion, respec-

²³Maria Teresa Brolis, “La crociata di Pietro il Venerabile: guerra di armi o guerra di idee?”, *Aevum* 61/2 (1987) 327-354. Elizabeth Siberry, *The Criticism of Crusades, 1095-1274* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Pietro Lamma, *Momenti di storiografia cluniacense*, Studi Storici dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, fasc. 42-44, Roma 1961.

²⁴Maria Teresa Brolis, “La crociata di Pietro il Venerabile”, 327-354.

tively, when the issue was re-discussed. Most of the scholars, even if the historical recordings have been recently the object of careful and pondered critics, place the discourse pronounced by Urban II in Clermont²⁵ as the culmination of an ideological process leading to the formulation of the concept of “meritorious violence” and *bellum iustum* (the just war) in relation to the necessity of fighting the enemies of Christianity under the spiritual aegis of the Catholic Church, which under this point of view claimed a key role in the rising political and social structure of the Christian Europe.²⁶

In the Council of Clermont and in the following ones, the role of the Catholic Church, interpreted as the fundamental identity marker of the new political reality born from the ruins of the Roman Empire, has been repeatedly restated and consolidated. The role of the clergy, according to what has been decreed in the councils, was to coun-

²⁵Urban II’s discourse in Clermont has been reported in five different versions: Fulbert of Chartres (1101), Robert the Monk (1107), Baldric of Dol (1108-1110), Guilbert of Nogent (1109) and William di Malmesbury who wrote thirty years after the end of the First Crusade. These Chronicles historically went back to the period after the First Crusade and for this reason could have been influenced by successive ideologies. Dana Carleton Munro, “The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095”, *American Historical Review* XI (1906) 231-242; Herbert Edward John Cowdrey, “Pope Urban’s II Preaching of the first Crusade”, *History*, 184 (1970), 177-188.

²⁶Giuseppe Cardoni, “Milites Christi per una ricerca sul clero in armi nell’Italia settentrionale dei secoli XII-XIII”, *Società, cultura, economica. Studi per Mario Vaini*, ed. Eugenio Camerlenghi-Giuseppe Gardoni-Isabella Lazzarini-Viviana Rebonato (Mantova: Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, 2013), 35-55, 37: “Il ricorso alla violenza, supportato da numerosi passi delle scritture, divenne metodo di conversione e di affermazione della nuova religione che indirizzò la sua azione sia al suo esterno che al suo interno, ossia verso coloro che venivano considerato eretici”. Grado Giovanni Merlo, “Militare per Cristo contro gli eretici”, *Contro gli eretici. La coercizione all’ortodossia prima dell’Inquisizione*, ed. Grado Giovanni Merlo, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996).

sel spiritually the fighters and, when there was a need, to encourage them to the defence of the faith. This perspective, which places the Church power at the centre of a hegemonic project aiming at controlling the fragmented secular power through a centralizing spiritual supremacy, helps us to locate the role of the clergy in the framework of the propaganda in support of the Crusaders.²⁷

Recently, some scholars of Medieval Christianity underlined the importance of the epistolary and diplomatic exchange between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church in the aftermath of the Battle of Manzikert (1071). This topic, for a long time, has been neglected, considering it wrongly quite marginal in the framework of the researches on the genesis of the phenomenon of the Crusaders. The victory of Manzikert represents the beginning of a series of conquests by the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine territory. The Byzantine Emperor searched the support of European armies in order to counteract the Turkish military advance. To this period belongs, in fact, the first diplomatic contact with the Pope Gregory VII and the chancellery of the Emperor Michael VII (1071-1078). The Catholic Church, which was requested to mediate and promote the military aid to the Byzantine Empire, put as a necessary condition of its involvement and effort in the fight against the Turks, the reunification of the Catholic and Orthodox church, attached to this was the demand

²⁷During the Second Lateran Council (1139), the reference to the role of clergy in the military enterprises remained quite ambiguous and, according to some scholars, the prohibition covered some roles as the crossbowmen and archers. The same prohibition has been restated during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. In the *Concordia Discordantium Canonum of Gratian*, a *summa* of the Canonical Medieval Thought, was denied to the members of the clergy to participate actively to the clashes and to them was reserved only the spiritual care of the fighters in defence of the faith. *Corpus Juris Canonici*, ed. Aemil Ludwig Richter-Emil Albert Friedberg (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879), coll. 888-895.

to recognise the supremacy of Rome and consequently of the Papacy on the whole Christian world. This first phase of negotiations, however, did not lead to any settlement of the issue between the two churches and the Byzantines did not receive any military help from the West, except what came from the effort of Robert the Guiscard, which was however, at the same time, independent and double-edged.²⁸ Pope Gregory VII expressed his deep disappointment in a letter sent to Hugh, then Abbot of Cluny, dated 22 January 1075. The main concern of the Pope was the lost opportunity of the reunification of the two churches, as the following passage clearly demonstrates:

“Great pain and universal sorrow obsess me. The church of the Orient is moving farther from the Catholic faith, and the devil, having killed it spiritually, causes its members to perish in the flesh by the sword of his henchmen lest at any time divine grace brings them to a better mind”.²⁹

The negotiations resumed during the Pontificate of Urban II at the time of the Emperor Alexius I Komnenos (1081-1118), during the winter of 1090-1091. According to some historians, the real motive behind the promotion of the first crusade was the attempt to bring to completion the endeavour started by Gregory VII, taking advantage of the political weakness and vulnerability of Byzantium.

²⁸Due to the conflictual relation between the Papacy and Robert the Guiscard, the negotiations with the Catholic Church were kept separated and suffered several setbacks and delays at the time of the brief alliance between Byzantium and Robert the Guiscard.

²⁹“Circumvallat enim me dolo immanis, et tristitia universalis, quia orientalis Ecclesia instinctu diaboli catholica fide deficit, ut per sua membra ipse antiquus hostis Christianos passim occidit, ut quos caput spiritualiter interfecit, eius membra carnaliter puniant, ne quando divina gratia resipiscant”, *Registrum*, MPL, 148: 400. Translation by Peter Charanis, “Byzantium, the West and the Origin of the First Crusade”, *Byzantium* 19 (1948-1949), 17-36, 23.

The accord seemed very close to be reached³⁰ and it has been underlined that the same Alexius I utilized the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre as a pretext to obtain military aid against the Turks.³¹

Both Greek and Latin documents demonstrate the existence, still not fully explained and clarified by historians, of a stunning discrepancy between the political and ideological reasons of the Crusades. It seems quite clear that the ideological frame, namely the “liberation” of the Holy Sepulchre, was intended to conceal and cover up the real political aim of the expedition towards the East. While the Emperor Alexius I understood the importance and the centrality of the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre as a pro-

³⁰Walther Holtzmann, “Die Unionsverhandlungen zwischen Kaiser Alexios I, un Papst Urban II. im Jahre 1089”, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 28/1 (1928), 38-67. Charanis, “Byzantium, the West and the Origin of the First Crusade”, 34.

³¹Greek source on Alexius I, Theodore Skutariotes, ed. Kostantinos Sathas, *Bibliotheca Graeca Medii Aevi*, 7 (Paris, 1894): “Having considered, therefore, that it was impossible for him alone to undertake the battle on which everything depended, he recognized that he would have to call in the Italians as allies, and effect this with considerable cunning, adroitness and deeply laid planning. For finding that this nation considered unbearable the domination of Jerusalem and the life-giving Sepulchre of Our Saviour Jesus Christ by the Persians and seeing therein a heaven-sent opportunity, he managed, by dispatching ambassadors to the bishop of Old Rome and to those whom they would call kings and rulers of those parts, and by the use of appropriate arguments, to prevail over not a few of them to leave their country and succeeded in directing them in every way to the task. That is the reason why many of them, numbering thousands and tens of thousands, having crossed the Ionian sea, reached Constantinople with all speed. And, having exchanged assurances and oaths with them he advanced towards the East. With the aid of God and their alliance and by his own efforts he speedily expelled the Persians from Roman territories, liberated the cities and restored his sway in the East to its former glory. Such was this emperor; great in the conception of plans and the doing.” English translation from original Greek by Charanis, “Byzantium, the West and the Origin of the First Crusade”, 34.

pagandistic pretext to obtain the much need military help against the Turks, the Catholic Church, through the notion of the Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, was confirming and restating its strong and central “political” role not only in Europe but at the world level, as the only legitimate representative of Christianity.

The religious and spiritual notion of “extra ecclesiam nulla salus”³² entailed also the universal role of Western Christianity not only in relation to Islam or Judaism, but also to the other Christian confessions and churches, as the Orthodox one. The role of spiritual guide of the entire Christian world needed to be constantly reaffirmed through an active political leadership, in which -according to a medieval paradigm- the spiritual and political elements often were confounded and merged, as it could be clearly seen in the propaganda of the First Crusade.

For this reason, the preaching of the war effort of the Crusaders, which could have involved not only the nobles but also the common population, needed a well-structured ideological propaganda in order to inspire and convince the common people and to be universally accepted. The propaganda was conducted quite widely in the sanctuaries and in the churches, where in the medieval times pilgrims gathered not only during the canonical festivities but also in every period of the year. During the preaching of the first crusade, due to the centrality attributed to the liberation of the Holy Land and the Holy Sepulchre, the notion of Islam as enemy of Christianity was promoted and consolidated, and an eminently political issue become an eschatological conflict between the Church of Christ and its enemies. In other words, the notion of “holy war” seems to have been formulated and spread in this time, if not in its verbal statement at least in the ideological one.

The war effort of the Crusades was aimed at involv-

³²Literally: “There is no salvation out of the Catholic Church”.

ing the military forces of the Catholic world, leading it against a unique and common enemy clearly identified and identifiable, in order to arrest the internal spinning pressure risking to endanger the political unity of the Christian world, which instead was constantly promoted and fostered by the Church. At the same time, through the preaching of the Crusaders, the Catholic Church promoted and reaffirmed its role of supreme spiritual guide of the Christian world. In the Middle Age the two categories of “politic” and “spiritual” respectively were not clearly discernible, even when the temporal side of the Church in several cases lead the papacy to fight with the then emerging secular powers.³³

From this point of view, then, the crusades could be reinterpreted as an attempt to harmonize and balance the two forces competing for the dominion and the supremacy in the Christian world, leading their aggression towards a common enemy. The medieval Christian world was a closed reality, homologated and aggressive, a world *in fieri* which, in the constant search for a stable and founding identity, did not tolerate any form of difference interpreted as a dangerous destabilizing element. The forces fighting for the political supremacy in different European territories constituted a constant danger for the unity of Christianity and the stability of medieval Europe and may be this is the reason why Pope Gregory VII (1073-85), understood the compelling need to arrest the wave of violence and barbarity which very often threatened not only

³³In this regard, it should be recalled that, at the beginning of the First Crusade, the political situation in Europe was quite unstable. The Emperor Henry IV (1056-1106) has not been recognised neither by Gregory VII (who excommunicated him in 1076) neither by Urban II, who became pope in 1088 and whose pontificate was not recognised by Henry IV, who instead previously invested with the same title Clement III (1080-1100). This happened in the historical frame of the Investiture Controversy between the end of XI century and the beginning of the XII century.

the spiritual interests of the Church, but also the temporal ones, promoted the formation of the so-called “militia Christi” (the army of Christ) or “militia Sancti Petri” (the army of Saint Peter), where the medieval military put itself freely at the service of the Pope to fight the enemies of Christianity. The institution of the soldiers of Christ or of Saint Peter³⁴ had, then, got a double aim, namely the spiritual control of the military and the targeting of a common enemy.

The notion of Crusade understood as an “holy pilgrimage” was actively proclaimed and preached by the common clergy in the churches, in the sanctuaries and monasteries, but in several cases also by bishops and archbishops and, if we have to trust a chronicle of that time, by the same Pope Urban II who was involved in the promotion of the crusades and to the spread of its ideological foundation in the Western and Southern France. The notion of pilgrimage, which has been central in the devotional and penitential practice of the Middle Ages, was resumed in the propagandistic language of the Crusades. In this new perspective, the pilgrimage was not directed to the worship of the saints’ relics but towards the Holy Sepulchre. The remission of the sins was promised to those who intended to pursue this holy pilgrimage driven only by religious devotion and not by the desire for mundane gains.³⁵ A few years later, during the I Lateran Council (1123), it was clearly stated that the Catholic Church granted the remissions of the sins to those who actively engaged in the defence of the faith against infidels.

In this regard, it has been noted³⁶ that the terms closely connected or expressing directly the notion of Cru-

³⁴Cowdrey, “Pope Urban’s II Preaching of the first Crusade”, 178.

³⁵In line with this perspective, Guilbert of Nogent defined in 1108 the Crusades as a “new mean to attain salvation”.

³⁶Cowdrey, “Pope Urban’s II Preaching of the first Crusade”, 182-188.

sade, as *Cruz*, *Crusada* and *Croseria*, appeared in Latin texts only from the XIII century. Previously, the Latin writers used linguistic terms related to the concept of pilgrimage to the Holy Land as, for example, *Iter* and *Peregrinatio*, namely “Travel” and “Pilgrimage”. The Latin expression *Iter Hierosolimitanum*³⁷ actually, in the XII century, started meaning to participate to the enterprise of the Crusades. In several letters sent by Pope Urban II to different European personalities³⁸ aimed at involving them in the proposed liberation of the Holy Land, it is clear the presence of a double discourse centred and rooted in the spiritual benefits deriving from the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in this particular case, intended with an active involvement in the fight against Islam interpreted as the enemy of Christendom. The liberation of the Holy Sepulchre, in the Church’s perspective, involved also the supposed liberation of the Eastern Churches, the same ones who actually welcomed the Muslim rule due to the severe persecution of the Byzantine Church.

The Abbot of Cluny, regarding the general nature and disposition of the Christian world towards the Islamic Civilization, did never put into discussion or doubted the necessity of undertaking an enterprise aimed at the military attack against Muslim power, but he drew a clear and neat distinction between the political authority of the Church expressed through the layman, whose duty was to fight with weapons and armies, and that one of monks and, in general ecclesiastics, who, by their role in the Christian world in general and in the Church hierarchies in particular, were called to fight with reason and dialectical disputation. In several passages of his rich epistolary,³⁹

³⁷Literally: “Travel to Jerusalem”.

³⁸Cowdrey, “Pope Urban’s II Preaching of the first Crusade”, 177-188.

³⁹Brolis, “La crociata di Pietro il Venerabile”, 349-354.

the Abbot of Cluny shows a deep concern in relation to the danger implied in the confusion between the secular orders, namely the cavalry and generally the layman, and the religious ones.⁴⁰ This confusion, in the long run, could have been extremely detrimental for the peculiarity of the consecrated life, as it was instituted and developed by the institutions of western monasticism. Notwithstanding, then, the necessity to respond with the armies to the Muslim political dominance in the East and to their presence in the West in the territories of Andalusia, the Abbot of Cluny refuses the idea of the “armed monk” preferring instead for them a quite different role in the framework of the fight against the Islamic world.

Putting into perspective, Peter the Venerable’s decision to translate the founding texts of Islamic civilization and to write a series of documents aiming at its confutation, appears more consistent with the general spirit of the time. In fact, notwithstanding the choice to root his polemic and apologetic works on the knowledge of Islamic texts appears original respect to the general disposition of the medieval clergy, however the Abbot of Cluny re-proposes the same paradigm promoted by the Catholic Church, strengthening it through a reference to a bond of continuity with the work of the Fathers of the Church:

“If, then, any heresy, in any time risen, could be immune from the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”, only Muhammad’s error will be protected and immune? Will the Christian language deal with it little or nothing? Maybe it is abstaining from what is harmless and less dangerous? O reader, this heresy has not provoked any damage to the Church of God? Did not this

⁴⁰This confusion of orders and status became quite evident at the time of the institutions of the order of the Templars, founded between 1118 and 1119 and officialised in 1129 under the spiritual patronage of Bernard of Clairvaux.

error devastate and ravage the Christian world? Who did tear its borders? Who increased the number of those lost into damnation?”⁴¹

In the *Contra sectam saracenorum*, Islam is actually introduced as a Christian heresy. The Abbot of Cluny expresses this concept both in the Letter to Bernard of Clairvaux and in several passages from the *Prologue*:

“My intention was to follow the example of the Fathers of the Church, who did not permit that any heresy of their time -even small or unimportant- could be passed under silence. Actually, they resisted with all the strength of the faith, and with both writings and discussion they demonstrated how each heresy should be detested and censured”.⁴²

“Indeed, the reason, which compelled me to write, is the same one which appeared evident to the numerous and excellent Fathers [of the Church]. Since they could not suffer even the slightest damage to the Christian faith, neither tolerate the insane madness of the heretic conceptions with respect to the right and sound doctrine, they avoided to remain silent, when it became necessary to speak, on the contrary fully aware that was more suitable for them

⁴¹D 179vs: “Si ergo nulla heresis quolibet tempore orta, immunis a “gladio Spiritus, quod est verbum Dei” esse potuit, nunquid tutus ab illo Mahumeticus error erit? An forte ut nullum aut parvum Christiana lingua transibit? An forte ut innoxio vel minus noxio parceret? Et quae unquam o lector haereis adeo aecclesiae Dei nocuit? Quis unquam error adeo rem publicam Christianam vexavit? Quis in tantum terminos eius rescidit? Quis tanta massa perditorum numerum infernalem adauxit?”

⁴²Epistola, A 4rs: “Fuit autem in hoc opera intentio mea, ut morem illum partum sequeretur, quo nullam unquam suorum temporum vel levissimam, ut sic dicam, haeresim, silendo praeterierunt, quin ei totis fidei viribus resisterent, et scriptis atque disputationibus esse detestandam ac damnabilem demonstrarent”.

in the balance of judgement -which stays with God. . . .”⁴³

The definition of Islam as a Christian heresy is endowed not only with a theological value but involves in general terms the foundations of the hegemonic project of the Catholic Church in the Middle Age. The notion of Islam as “heresy” has not been formulated originally by Latin medieval thinkers, but instead by a John of Damascus (675-749), the famous representative of the Eastern Orthodox Church, recognised by Catholics also as one of the Church Fathers. The conception of heresy has been also at the centre of the religious policy of the Byzantines which reflected clearly the specular relation between political universalism and religious⁴⁴ uniformity based on the creed established as orthodox by the early councils. The same paradigm of power organization and hegemony was later re-proposed in the Catholic world for the reasons previously explained.

The word “heresy” comes from the Greek noun “aireo” which could be translated as “to choose”, “to make a choice putting somebody out of the group he originally belongs”. According to this perspective, the heretic could be defined as a kind of “betrayal” or “an extremely dangerous stranger”, since he could be considered, at the same time, familiar and remote from the group’ common experience or, as in this case, the hegemonic culture or civilization.⁴⁵

⁴³D 178rd: “Causa plane scribendi haec michi fuit, quae multis et magnis patribus extitit. Non poterunt illi pati quamlibet vel parvam iacturam fidei Christianae, nec adversus sanam doctrinam insanientem multifarium hereticorum vesaniam tolerarunt. Caverunt esse muti ubi loquendum erat, advertentes immo plenissime scientes, non minus se addicendos in subtili apud Deum statera iudicat de infructuoso vel quod maius est dampnoso silentio, quam de verbo otioso vel noxio”.

⁴⁴Codex Iustinianus 1.1.1; quoted in Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of the New Rome* (London: Phoenix, 1980).

⁴⁵Lester Kurtz, “The Politics of Heresy”, *American Journal of*

The heretic, according to the orthodox perspective, is familiar since he shares the founding religious heredity of a civilization -in this case the medieval *Latinitas* - but he is stranger and dangerous since he “decided”, throughout a personal and extra-canonical interpretation of the Holy Scripture, to create a language and a grammar placed at the heart of a different civilization and (by necessity) opposed, which both from the theological and political perspectives could not be interpreted as equal, complementary to the Christian one or reclaiming the same right to exist along with it.

The notion of heresy, generally understood, and not exclusively in relation to Islam, constitutes one of the foundational assets of the Latin-Christianity civilization both in relation to other denominations reclaiming the Christian name and other faiths as Judaism⁴⁶ and Islam. The notions of orthodoxy and heresy, according to the medieval Catholic mindset, are two terms existing in a bilateral relation form the semantic point of view, but unilateral from the political one. Orthodoxy and heresy could be understood in a semantic bilateral relation, since the orthodoxy is defined through heresy and vice versa. In other words, the notion of heresy is functional to the formulation of the orthodox theological discourse. The Latin Christianity, through the notion of heresy and the military struggle against the heretics, defines both its foundational theological discourse and the political supremacy through the spiritual oversight on Christian nations. In

Sociology 88/6 (1983): 1085-115; Shogimen Takashi, “Rethinking Heresy as a Category of Analysis”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 88/3 (September 2020), 726-748; Talal Asad, “Medieval Heresy: An Anthropological View”, *Social History* 11/3 (1986), 345-62.

⁴⁶Peter the Venerable wrote also against Judaism in its *Liber adversus Judaeorum inveteratam duritiem* (Book against the ancient Jewish lack of understanding), written between 1140 and 1143.

other words, this paradigm is rooted in the identification between *Cristianitas* and *Latinitas*, namely between the Christian-Catholic Church and the Latin civilization. This identification unveils the deep relation between orthodoxy and the legitimate political power in the Middle Age. When the Abbot of Cluny portrays Islam as a heresy and the Muslim world as “heretic”, he is implicitly reclaiming the right of the Christian world to re-conquest what belongs to it by right.

In another passage from the *Liber contra sectam*, Peter the Venerable says:

“The Islamic rage arisen from the Ishmaelite Arabs, corrupted Persians, Medes, Syrians, Armenians, Ethiopians, Indians and the remaining oriental kingdom and a wide part of Asia or almost its totality, and diverting them from Christianity or from the ancient errors converted them to that sect, removing them from Christ and subjugating them to the Devil. Then not with the peaceful reason but with the violent invasion, after having submitted almost all the East with the strength of the armies, won Egypt, Libya, and the whole Africa to that profane religion and so, after having occupied two parts of the world, did not leave intact to Christ and to his Christians even the third one, which we call Europe, after having entered into Spain”.⁴⁷

⁴⁷D 179vd: “At Mahumeticus furor ab Hysmaelitis Arabibus sumens exordium, Persas, Medos, Syros, Armenois, Ethiopes, Indos, ac reliqua orientis regna ipsamque in tribus orbis partibus maximam Asiam pene totam corrumpit, et vel a Christianismo avertens, vel a quibuslibet antiquis erroribus ad perditionis hominis sectam convertens, subtraxit Christo, substravit diabolo. Hinc non miti ratione, sed violenta incursione, toto fere ut dictum est armis oriente subacto, Egyptum, Lybiam, Affricamque universam prophanæ religioni subiecit, et sic duabus mundi partibus occupatis, nec tertiam quæ Europa vocatur, Hyspania pervasa Christo vel Christianis suis integra, dereliquit”.

In the same way the Fathers of the Church fought for a long time against every form of doctrinal deviation in order to preserve the integrity of the doctrine of the Christian-Catholic faith, the Medieval Church -*de facto* spiritual leader of the new political reality of Europe and *de iure* of all the Christian world- was in the middle of a conflict against Islam, which is actually defined as the *pessimus hostis dei*.⁴⁸

In another passage from the *Summa totius haeresis saracenorum*, the Abbot of Cluny expresses this perspective as follows:

“Meanwhile, through the judgment of the One who is defined “terrible in his counsels over the sons of men” [Ps. 95:5] and “has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden” [Rom. 9:18], permitted that was submitted to the error of Satan and Sergius, the monk, who belonged to the Nestorian sect and, after being expelled from the Church, moved to that part of Arabia. In this way, a bond was created between the heretic monk and the false prophet. Then Sergius in league with Mahumeth, completed what was missing and understood the scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments according to Nestorian doctrine, which deny that our Saviour is God, partly as has been interpreted by himself, when it was explained to him, and instructing him with the lies of the apocryphal writings, made him a Nestorian Christian”.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “The worst enemy of God”. *Liber contra sectam*, Liber Primus, D 184vd-D 185rs.

⁴⁹ A 2rs: “Cum interim iudicio illius qui “terribilis in consiliis” dicitur “super filios hominum” et qui “miseretur cui vult, et quem vult indurat”, dedit Sathan successum errori, et Segium monachum, heretici Nestorii sectatorem, ab ecclesia expulsum, ad partes illas Arabiae transmisit, et monachum hereticum pseudoprophetae coniuxit. Itaque Segius coniunctus Mahumeth, quod ei deerat supplevit, et scripturas sacras tam Veteris Testamenti quam Novi secundum

The writings of Peter the Venerable substantially restated, in a structured and systematic way, the conceptions circulating in Europe about Islam; and their study clearly demonstrates that the reading of the Islamic sources translated into Latin did not lead to a clarification of the Islamic doctrine or to an individual and personal awareness about the real nature of Islamic faith and the content of the Quranic revelation along with the main features of the Islamic civilization intended as distinct and separate from the Christendom. In other words, the Abbot of Cluny used the Latin translation of the Quran and other writings in a wanton and deviant way. His aim, in fact, was not to achieve knowledge of Islam objectively as a faith, but instead to elaborate a polemic text aiming at the conversion of Muslims. The Christian Middle Age, in the countenance of the Ecclesiastical hierarchy, was a militant reality engaged constantly in a “missionary” activity which often accompanied or overlapped the military effort against the “infidels” and the “heretics”. Although Peter expresses the will to get close to Muslims inspired by Christian love, the language employed in the First book of the *Contra sectam* and in other passages of the same text betrays a belligerent intent, as could be noticed in the following passage:

“I strongly turn towards you, nor as always we do, along with weapons, but with words, not with violence but with reason, not with hatred but with love”.⁵⁰

“I invite you then to the salvation, not the short-lived one but the permanent, not the one terminating with this

magistri sui Nestorii intellectum, qui Salvatorem nostrum Deum esse negabat, partim prout sibi visum est, ei exponens, simulque apochriphorum fabulis cum plenissime imbuens, Christianum Nestorianum effecit”.

⁵⁰D 181rs: “Aggreditor inquam vos, non ut nostri saepe faciunt amis sed verbis non vi sed ratione non odio sed amore”.

brief life but the one resting in the eternal life. Time has been instituted by God for the mortals in order they may learn how to use it, but only those who understand about God what is true and did not care only about the phantasies of their hearts, but those who know how He wanted and thought to be worshipped”.⁵¹

Although Peter the Venerable’s attitude could be considered revolutionary under some aspects, however is not far from the prevalent medieval *weltanschauung*. The implicit perspective, in the Abbot of Cluny’s point of view (as of all the Medieval Christian writers) on the role of the Catholic Church in the world order, could be defined both exclusivist and all-encompassing. According to this paradigm every ethnic-religious community, both endowed or not with a distinct political expression, was a potential subject to conversion and assimilation in the uniform world order promoted and governed by the Ecclesiastical hierarchies.

⁵¹D 181rd: “Invito vos ad salutem, non quae transit, sed quae permanet, non quae finitur cume vita brevi, sed quae permanet in vitam aeternam. Hanc consequi, hac tempore a Deo praestituto frui mortalibus quidem datum est, sed non nisi illis qui de Deo quod est, non quod non est sentiunt, qui cum iuxta cordis sui phantasmata, sed sicut ipse se coli et vult et praecipit colunt”.

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Did Fuat Sezgin challenge Orientalism?
An Evaluation on the Basis of his “Science and
Technology in Islam”

Muammer İskenderoğlu

Abstract

This article argues that the superiority of any civilisation over another depends on its scholars' contribution to the different areas of common human heritage. Western civilisation superiority seems to be due to its scholars' contribution not only to their history of science, culture and art but also of other civilisations as well. In this context, this article focuses on Western scholars' contribution to the knowledge of the East in general, and Islamic civilization in particular. The article examines the figure of the Turkish scholar Fuat Sezgin's Science and Technology in Islam and argues that Sezgin did not challenge Orientalism, in fact he worked within its frame of reference and methodology. In fact, Sezgin, at the same time, used Orientalist scholars' methodology, heavily benefited from their previous studies and appreciated their contributions to Islamic civilisation. The article concludes that the panorama presented by Sezgin in this work in the field of science and technique in Islam, can be also introduced in a similar way in relation to other fields and the result will not be different.

Keywords: Islam, History of Science, Fuat Sezgin, Orientalism.

The main feature determining the superiority of a civilization respect to others is closely related to its scholars' capacity and ability to elaborate and offer a deep and reliable knowledge on human heritage by researching both their own history of science, culture and art as well as other civilizations' achievements in the same fields. In our contemporary time, this is actually what seems to make, to such an extend, Western civilization superior to other cultural and historical experiences. Scholars of Western civilization produced and shared, in fact, knowledge not only about their own history, but also on that one of all other civilizations as well. Most remarkably, this knowledge became actually a reference and a framework for both the entire intellectual and scientific world.

In the context of this article, our interest is mainly focused on Western scholars' contribution to the knowledge of the East in general, and Islamic civilization in particular. There is actually a long history of Western scholars' interest in the East, known as Orientalism. In his masterpiece, *Orientalism*, Said gives the most readily accepted designation for Orientalism as follows: "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient ... either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism."¹

Of course, there are different stages and features of Orientalism and Orientalists' interest in the East and each of them has different purposes and goals. However, whatever their purposes and goals may be, in the end they have produced a detailed and precise knowledge on different aspects of both the Eastern and Islamic civilizations. Their methods and findings could be subject to criticism, and actually they have been criticised severely and poignantly even within the Western scholarship, but

¹Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conception of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 2.

this does not undermine their contribution to a reliable and quite informative knowledge of the East or Islamic civilization. Instead, among Muslim scholars and in Islamic scholarship still permanes and persists the stress on the negative aspect of Orientalism and this viewpoint actually prevent Muslim scholars from acknowledging the Orientalist contribution to Islamic studies. In what follows, I will present a Muslim scholar who choose instead a quite different approach.

Fuat Sezgin (1924-2018) was a Turkish scholars of the history of Arabic-Islamic science. He entered the academic life under the supervision and the mentorship of the Hellmut Ritter (1892-1971), the prominent German Orientalist. After receiving his Ph.D from Istanbul University in 1950, he worked at Ankara University and then at Istanbul University for a while, but after 1960 military coup in Turkey, he was dismissed from the University for non-academic reasons. German Orientalists helped him to find a position in Germany and consequently Sezgin started working at the University of Frankfurt, first as a visiting professor, and from 1965 onward as full professor. In 1982 Sezgin found and directed the Institute of the History of the Arab Islamic Sciences in Frankfurt along with several museums on related topics, in 1983. In 2008 in Turkey, at Istanbul precisely, he was the main founder of a Museum containing, along with other treasures, also the reproductions and models of historical Arabic-Islamic scientific instruments, tools and maps. In order to introduce and explain the instruments displayed in the museum, Sezgin wrote *Science and Technology in Islam*.

Sezgin continued his academic life in the Western Orientalist tradition and through his painstaking studies, he became a renowned scholar of science, who contributed to the coming to light of important studies on the history of Islamic science and other aspects of Muslim civilization.

In fact, his best known publication, the 17 volumes of the *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* (*History of Arab Literature*), became a standard reference in the field.²

However, it seems that the Members of a cultural and scientific environment who did not give to Sezgin the respect due to a scholar of his caliber in his life and who are quite far from his academic worldview, are using his name today to challenge both the West and Orientalism. In the perspective of these intellectuals, Fuat Sezgin became a tool to be used against the West. At the same time, while challenging the West, these scholars seem to lack the capacity and the skill of reading both the scientific and philosophical works of their own civilization, trapped as they are in the futile discussion whether the authors of these valuable works were infidels or heretics, at the same time, also boasting with (or through) them against the West.

As mentioned above, Western scholars have been conducting researches not only on the West, but also on all parts of the world for centuries. Of each cultural area, they produced a more detailed and systematic knowledge than the members of these areas. Of course, very rarely a knowledge is obtained or produced just for the sake of knowledge, and this is also the case. This knowledge, most of the time, was primarily intended at the service of the practical interests of those who produced it, and then -secondarily- to the benefit of the whole humanity. In fact, it is unlikely that all the researchers work with the same academic seriousness and produce reliable knowledge of the same high level or standard. This also applies to those who work on the East in general and Islam in particular.³

²For Sezgin's life and work, *A Life Dedicated to Science: Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin* (<http://en.ibtav.org/page/1/biography>, Date Accessed: 15. 08. 2020)

³Critical evaluation of these works see, for example. Said, *Orientalism*; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an*

Sezgin himself also focuses the attention on this distinction at the same time acknowledging the sincere efforts of these pionieristic scholars:

“It cannot be expected and claimed naturally that they are all handled with a very precious, objective and friendly view and concluded; among them there are those that are handled theologically which hurt Muslims. When I say orientalist research results, I mean the contribution of humanists who gave most of their lives to the study of Islamic sciences and publication of the resources. Since I have been writing on history of Islamic sciences for 55 years, I encounter their works every day. Today if we know that Islamic cultural world has an important place in the history of science, we owe a huge part of this knowledge to them.”⁴

The criticism of Orientalism coming from some circles, who are not at all interested in other civilizations and consider even the scientific, philosophical and artistic works of their own civilization as an unnecessary and sometimes dangerous pursuit, may be seen and interpreted as a reflection of their backwardness, inferiority complex and inability to gain similar success. How does Fuat Sezgin evaluate and judge the contribution of Western scholars to the history of Islamic science, philosophy and art?

I will try to answer this central question referring specially and mainly to his *Science and Technology in Islam*.⁵ Before starting, however, I would like to remind the

Image (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993).

⁴Fuat Sezgin, “Müslümanların Bilimler Tarihinde 800 Yıl Süren Yaratıcı Merhalesini Ne Kadar Tanıyoruz?”. *İslâm Bilimler Tarihine Üzerine Konferanslar*, ed. Zeynep Berktaş-Tuğçe İnceoğlu (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2012), 45.

⁵Fuat Sezgin, *Wissenschaft und Technik im Islam*, Translated into English as *Science and Technology in Islam*, by Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma (Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, 2010).

readers of an important point related to Western scholars' general approach to their history, which could be in some cases quite ambivalent. Some Western intellectuals, for example, portrayed one epoch of their history, namely the Middle Ages, as the dark age, while other Western historians demonstrated through well-researched works that this age was not at all dark or totally backward as depicted for a long time by the mainstream scholarship. In this context then, it is equally necessary to re-evaluate Westerns scholars' negative depiction of the history of science, philosophy and art in Islam. At this point, the answers to the following question becomes central: Did Muslim or the Western researchers, throughout their serious intellectual efforts, replace this negative image with a positive one?

As an answer to this question, we can consider the following lines in the preface of Sezgin's work:

"It is true that, since the powerful impetus we owe to J. J. Sedillot, L. A. Sedillot, F. T. Reinaud and F. Woepcke, much has been contributed by the Arabists, who were interested in the history of science, towards modification of the prevalent unfounded notion about the achievements made by the Arabic-Islamic world in the intellectual history of humankind."⁶

At a time when, in the Islamic world, there was no study dedicated to the history of Islamic science, these researchers struggled to change Western academy's viewpoint. These efforts produced in the long run a change of paradigm in the way scholars look at and considered the achievements of Islamic science. As a result, the history of Islamic science gained a totally new place in the Western intellectual and scientific space. It should be kept in mind, however, that these researchers did not aim to

⁶Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam, Volume 1: Introduction to the History of Arabic-Islamic Sciences*, trans. Renate Sarma-Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/10-11.

prove the indebtedness or superiority of one civilisation on the other. The aim of these researchers is, as was that of Muslim philosophers centuries ago, to emphasize that science and philosophy are cumulative process and that each nation or civilization has contributed to this process and transferred it to the next generation of scholars and scientists. In fact, Sezgin also draws attention to this point quoting an excerpt from Reinaud:

“Chance does not play such an important role in the progress of the technical sciences and the arts. In all its discoveries, humanity moves at an even pace, step by step, not by leaps and bounds. It does not always march ahead with the same speed, but its progress is continuous. Man does not invent, he deduces. If we take any area of human knowledge, its history, that is to say the history of its progress, should form an uninterrupted chain; the factual history provides us with parts of this chain, and our research must consist in finding the lost links so that we can join one part with the other.”⁷

In response to the question of who combined these parts, Sezgin clearly says:

“While striving for such a revision, we proceed neither in our basic assumptions nor in our actions in a heuristic manner, but believe in the unity of the history of science, thus adhering to the credo formulated by Reinaud and Fave to the effect that the common scientific heritage of mankind grows by continuous steps, though not always in a linear fashion but though with varying speed. When a particular culture area at a given time takes the lead, or rather, is led to take the scientific heritage further by yet another step, be it large or small, then the historical conditions and the level of progress achieved by the fore-runner are the factors that influence the speed and the

⁷Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/vii-viii.

progress, if any, of the successor.”⁸

Which scholar is particularly prominent in the study of the role and contribution of Islamic tradition in the history of science, philosophy and art in general, and, at the same time, in its effects and influences on European science, philosophy and art, in particular? Sezgin states that Sarton has been the scholar who gave the best contribution in the field of the general history of science:

“To date George Sarton (1884-1956) has been the only historian of science who has made the effort to fully utilize the results of Arabist research. This he did in a masterly way in his Introduction to the History of Science.”⁹

Sezgin also states that his deductions and discoveries have not sufficiently been taken into consideration by the next generations of scholars and scientists. Sezgin also mentions Renan with appreciation in the fields of both philosophy and science:

“A rare phenomenon in the history of science is the French Arabist Ernest Renan (1823–1892), who dealt with the issue of the reception of the Arab–Islamic sciences in the West in the field of philosophy. Writing his ingenious and admirable study *Averroès et l’Averroïsme* in 1853, Renan had at his disposal only a small number of sources and he could hardly count on the support of his contemporaries. Nevertheless his work has remained valid to some extent until today.”¹⁰

Sezgin’s appreciation of the contributions of Orientalists to various disciplines continues throughout the work.

⁸Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/ix-x.

⁹Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/2. Reference to George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore, 1927-1948).

¹⁰Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/79. Reference to Ernest Renan, *Averroès et l’Averroïsme* (Paris 1867).

For example, in relation to the science of music he writes:

“In the field of music and musical theory the question of the “Arabian influence” was addressed, fortunately, quite early-on in comprehensive studies. Not even a century had passed since the first surveys of “Arabian” music by R. G. Kiesewetter and J. G. L. Kosegarten, when the Spanish Arabist Julian Ribera y Tarragó in his *La música de las Cantigas* produced a pioneering work on the question of Arabian influences.”¹¹

Sezgin states that Heinrich Schipperges has done great services with his researches on the transmission and assimilation of Arabic-Islamic medicine to Europe.¹²

Sezgin mentions also the Russian orientalist W. Barthold, to whom we own important works in the field of the history of geography:

“Barthold describes the role of the Arab–Islamic area in the history of geography with deep respect and appreciation and continues: “Individual Arab maps were already being used by Europeans in the Middle Ages; some works by Arab geographers appeared in Latin translation as early as in the XVIIth century; despite this the detailed and accurate information of the Arabs on the Caspian and Aral Sea, the Oxus and Jaxartes had no influence on European science. What Western Europe could have learnt 800 years earlier from the Arabs was only learnt from the Russians in the XVIIIth century.”¹³

Arab-Islamic science has reached Europe in different ways. Two of these roads, namely through Muslim Spain and through Sicily and Southern Italy respectively, are

¹¹Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/80. Reference to Julian Ribera y Tarragó, *La música de las Cantigas* (Madrid, 1922).

¹²Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/83.

¹³Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/121.

often referred to and several researches and studies have been dedicated to the topic, but a third way, namely the Byzantine road of transmission, is often unfortunately neglected. According to Sezgin, Usener attracted the attention of historians of science in this overlooked field:

“Hermann Usener already became aware of manuscripts containing Byzantine translations of Arabic–Persian books in European libraries a hundred and thirty years ago. Subsequent research also occasionally drew attention to translations of Arabic books into Byzantine Greek...”¹⁴

Sezgin states that the Byzantine adventure of Arab-Islamic science was interrupted first due to and in the aftermath of the establishment of Latin Crusader State, as a consequence of the occupation of Byzantium in the 13th century, and later by the disappearance of the produced literature.¹⁵

More examples could be given, but the above mentioned ones are sufficient for the present research’s purpose. Actually I am trying to underline that Sezgin offers a description of the history of Islamic science based on the results of the works and researches of the Orientalists rather than challenging them. In this context, Sezgin’s last evaluations are as follows:

“As far as we can judge from the results of research to date, the creativity seems to have begun in the fields of the natural sciences and the exact sciences around the middle of the 3rd/9th century -in individual cases even earlier- and the process of reception and assimilation seems to have been completed towards the end of the century. Creativity continued in all fields with an intensity that can be traced, although it was not always linear, and continued

¹⁴Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/141-142.

¹⁵Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma and Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/144.

even with the establishment of new fields of sciences until the 15th century - in individual cases also up to the end of the 16th century.”¹⁶

Who are the researchers who helped us to learn and recognise the place of Arab-Islamic science in the history of science of the Arab-Islamic tradition? We can answer again with Sezgin’s clear words:

“However, research into the history of Arabic-Islamic sciences has advanced so much since the commendable pioneering work by the indefatigable scholars Jean-Jacques Sédillot, Louis-Amelie Sédillot, Joseph-Toussaint Reïnaud, Franz Woepcke, Michael Jan de Goeje, Eilhard Wiedemann, Carl Schoy, Heinrich Suter and others from the 19th century and the first third of the 20th century, and this research has furnished us with so much convincing material that we - true to our responsibility - must make every attempt to bring about a revision of the prevailing assessment of our subject in the historiography of science.”¹⁷

As a conclusion it can be said that, undoubtedly, the panorama presented by Sezgin in this work in the field of science and technique in Islam, can be also introduced in a similar way in relation to other fields and the result will not be different. Ultimately, science and scientists are the common patrimony of humanity, rather than the special heritage of one single civilization, nation or society. Those who can claim this heritage gain both material and moral superiority over other communities; those who cannot get their share of this heritage have to bear the consequences.

¹⁶Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma-Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/148.

¹⁷Sezgin, *Science and Technology in Islam*, trans. Renate Sarma-Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 1/149-150.

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The Concept of Civil State in the Framework of Islamic Juridical Tradition: Introductory Remarks

Jasser Auda

Abstract

The concept of “civil state” can be a source of change and progress at political, social and economic levels in the Muslim world through a new perspective on Islamic jurisprudence based on the ‘Maqāsid Al-Sharī‘ah’, namely the aims, inner purpose and scope of Islamic law. A perspective based on the ‘Maqāsid will be helpful in overcoming the stagnation of Islamic jurisprudence and some of its time-bound prescriptions and characteristics. This will open the way to the formulations of new theories and perspectives, thus enabling to take the Muslim community to a better future, without renouncing its Islamic roots and identity. At the same time, the notions of Islamic roots and identity should be revised through an honest historical research which is focused not only on the dynamics of power structures, but on the social, economic and cultural achievements, as well setbacks, of the Muslim community.

Keywords: Civil State, ‘Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah’, Islamic History, Islamic Jurisprudence.

The word “state”¹ derives from the Latin “status”. The term “civitas”, instead, in the beginning, referred to people’s legal status, later it lost its original meaning and has been associated mainly with the legal system applied to society as a whole. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, the word “state” assumed a meaning closer to the modern one.²

The end of the Thirty Years War, in 1648, with the peace of Westphalia, is the turning point in the dominant model of the state. The international community built the Peace of Westphalia on the absolute authority of the nations involved, implying at the same time, the adoption of the principle of their equality at the international level, without considering their religious affiliation, both Catholic and Lutheran. In this way, the notion of “state”, intended in the medieval society for the administration of a hierarchical organization, has been replaced by the concept of nation, understood as a source of authority which, at the same time, relates with and subjected to the international law.³

The state, which needs a specific government for a real and effective application of the dominant authority, exercises its governance through the law. And the modern western state can be defined as a kind of traditional legal system, according to the definition proposed by Max Weber.⁴ However, the distinctive feature of the modern state is the ideology considering it as an abstract idea separated

¹Jasser Auda, *Lezioni sullo Stato Civile, il Post-Islamismo and il Post-Secolarismo*, trans. Sabrina Lei (Rome: Tawasil International 2019).

²Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (Turin: UTET, 2006).

³Brian R. Nelson, *The Making of the Modern State*, (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

⁴Max Weber, “Politics as a vocation”, *Max Weber Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans H. Gerth and Charles W. Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

from the power and its exercise. According to Bodin,⁵ the concept of sovereignty includes, first of all, the authority within the borders of national state and the monopoly in the administration of the law. The sovereignty, understood as the supreme authority in the country, cannot be bounded by anything except the natural law.

The western theories related to the concept of the state and its role can be further distinguished in the following three groups. The first is the theory of Capitalism, which is grounded in liberalism, according to which the state should be considered as a separate entity, both from the society and the economy. The second theory is the leftist one, historically derived from Marxism, according to which the state has got the function of controlling both economy and society for the public good. In both these perspectives, the economic relationships assume a central role, in the light of which, also all the social and political functions are interpreted. The third theory, instead, considers the society as a neutral reality representing simply the will of the group or party that wins the elections. However, in a society where the power is organised in a competitive way, as is the case of the pluralistic system⁶, the concept of the state as a neutral entity ends in promoting the interests of the majoritarian groups.

The Arab-Islamic countries, in the contemporary world, can be interpreted as a confused mixture of these three systems. At the same time, in the Arab world, the necessity of creating a “civil state” is both felt and discussed. The development of this project, despite the apparent incompatibility with the original concept, originated and developed within the western environment, with respect

⁵Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, ed. Julian H. Franklin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶Robert Dahl R., *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

to the political history of Islamic countries, is, however necessary, especially in this very sensitive historical time.

In the Arabic language, the word “civil” is usually translated with the term “madanīyah”, which does not appear in the Quranic text and in the sphere of western political science, is usually employed in a limited number of cases and always with different nuances. Generally speaking, “civil” means something not derived from what in the social politics, both in the East and in the West, is defined as “state”, except that in some specific cases, where the concepts of state authority and civil sovereignty are kept distinct.

Jacques Rousseau⁷, for example defined “civil” that part of the law dealing with both the rights and duties of individuals. Hobbes, instead, with the same adjective, means a context outside of the Catholic Church, and defines “civil service” as a phase where the rights are adequate to the concept of what is called “civil society”.⁸

John Rawls developed a thesis⁹, originally formulated by Kant, on the civil state in order to formulate a new theory related to social justice, which has been built in the same way of the social contract, starting from the original condition of human beings, also defined as “natural”. In this situation, human beings do not form a community and live their existence closer to natural world than the civilised one. They are not aware of the reciprocal relationships and the way they can get advantage from the public order. This awareness is not reached until they don’t develop a determinate stage of capacity and intel-

⁷Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract and Discourses*, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1913).

⁸Andreas Osiander, *Before the State: Systemic Political Change in the West from the Greeks to the French Revolution*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁹John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971).

ligence. Rawls argues that people in this natural state need a society, allowing them to enjoy the essential freedoms and a form of economic security. Later, after the construction of the modern state, the opportunities are created, through the social contract, among different people, on the basis of the following principles: cooperation, equality, self-respect, respect for others and their property. These principles, in turn, constitute also the foundation of any modern society, which could be virtually accepted by all their components, if they wish to build it on the ground of a social contract.

However, an analysis of the related concepts of the political discourse that cannot be avoided, if we are to grasp the issue in its depth, must approach their nature or essence as eternal and immutable. These concepts, in fact, assume a complexity according to the historical, sociological and cultural frameworks in which they emerged for the first time. This is due to the nature of language.

A single word does not have a fixed and univocal meaning, but, just like concepts, interacts with other terms in the linguistic context of reference. It is equally necessary to underline that, in relation to the meaning of a concept, as expressed by a specific term, it is possible to assume two main perspectives, which philosophy classifies as nominalist and realist, respectively.¹⁰ According to the latter, the definition of a term endowed with a fixed meaning identifying an entity, coincides with its real nature. Instead, according to the nominalist theory, the word and its definition are both mental constructions, ultimately related to the human experience within a given context. The connection between the name and its reference cannot be defined as a simple juxtaposition relation but rather as both an

¹⁰Robert Flood-Ewart Carson, *Dealing with Complexity: an introduction to the Theory and Application of Systems Science*, Vol. 2, (New York, London: Springer 1993).

understanding and a perception of the surrounding world.

The concept, then, creating determined mental images, does not have necessarily clear and univocal bounds, but could vary in the limits of what is reasonable. These considerations do not belong exclusively to abstract philosophy, they could be also applied to concept of “state”, which has got a dynamic meaning instead of a univocal and fixed one. To say that the term has got a dynamic meaning means that it is subject to a historical process of development, and consequently, could vary according to different times and situations.

If, instead, we interpret the state or the political system as “fixed” and “immutable”, we prevent the researchers and scholars from starting a process of revision. However, it is not our intention to de-structuralise the concept of state supporting an anarchic point of view, but an effort will be made here to undertake a historically comprehensive analysis of the concept in order to create the conditions for its reformulation according to the *‘Maqāsid Al-Shari‘ah’*.

Everything that exists is in a stream of perpetual change: nothing is static or inevitably fixed.¹¹ This truth is applicable both to the nature and the moral life. Every being or meaning renew himself and evolve through the interaction with reality and the outside world.

These general principles could be equally applied to the nature of jurisprudential concepts regarding mainly Islamic policy. The *Fiqh*, or jurisprudence, is, in fact, formed by a set of norms and legal pronouncements resulting from the understanding of Quran and Sunna by a single scholar¹² or a school of thought. Consequently,

¹¹The Holy Quran 55:29: “To Him turn everyone in the heavens and on the earth for their needs; and everyday He manifests Himself in yet another way”.

¹²God the Most High cannot be called *Faqih*, since nothing is hidden from His knowledge, but the same word can be adequately

no branch of *Fiqh*, including the one dealing with principles and forms of governance, can be considered eternal and immutable. The cognitive and time-bound nature of Islamic jurisprudence is then an essential feature, which should be recalled in order to enlighten the diversity of approaches, points of view and opinions.

‘*Maqāsid Al-Sharī‘ah*’, its theological dimension and system of values, represent an essential part of the analysis of political concepts and of their meaning both inside and outside the limits of a reflection that is properly Islamic. The aims and purposes (‘*Maqāsid*) of *Sharī‘ah*’ concern the reasons and the scopes behind the legal pronouncement or *Fiqh* system.

Sharī‘ah’ proposes and teaches “eternal values” and “universal aims” which should be realised every time within a specific historical and cultural context endowed with well-defined features¹³. The work of the classical jurists, in fact, is not located in a vacuum, but it has, as a main aim, the purpose to answer, according to the “Islamic teachings”, the needs and the challenges of the people or ethnic groups adhering to Islam. The *Fātāwā* or legal pronouncements, belonging to a strictly juridical sphere, seem to be consequently, for the reasons previously explained, the expression of a specific context.

The principles, aims, and eternal values, which could be reassumed with the word *Sharī‘ah*’, are called to assume a leading role in the historical process. If, instead, they are transformed in the negation of every historical development, they are deprived of their main role and become the excuse to deny the reality of human history, which the Quran considers as one of the greatest signs of

used in the case of human beings, who have a partial and limited knowledge.

¹³Jasser Auda, ‘*Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah*’ as *Philosophy of Islamic Law, a Systems Approach* (Washington: IIIT, 2008).

God. In this perspective, the dialectics between temporality and eternity assumes an essential role, as it is expressed at the individual and social levels.

The Islamic law, in fact, could not be confined exclusively to the regulations formulated in a specific historical and cultural context; actually it involves several aims and principles can be applied beyond the trappings of specific spatial and time bound dimensions.

To avoid the examination of aims and purposes of the *Shari'ah*, means to close the door of understanding of the finality of the law, and consequently, the scholars are prevented from concentrating the attention on the “reasons why” in different contexts such as: religion, art, medicine, media and politics.

These reflections will promote and allow the understanding of ideas, in order to employ them to develop concepts’ analysis and the terminology related to “causal relationship”. This would enable actually the scholar to correct the shortcomings and weaknesses of the research in the context of Islamic political thought.

The different proposals at the jurisprudential level, constituting the foundation of a new political theory, should be rooted also in a new methodology. The methodological proposal, more interesting and innovative, is constituted, in the field of Islamic jurisprudence, by the swift from binary and unidimensional logic to a systemic and multi-dimensional approach¹⁴ in order to open towards a holistic and teleological dimension, where the reciprocal relations between the system elements are analysed in their dynamism and multi-dimensionality. A multidimensional logic would constitute a valid help to overcome, in the sphere of Islamic jurisprudence, the binary approach, which reduces

¹⁴ Jasser Auda- Mohamed Kamel, “A Modular Neural Network for Vague Classification”, *Computer Science, Lecture notes in Artificial Intelligence* (2000).

the possibility of the existence of different perspectives and points of view, and consequently, ends up in restricting or even denying completely the root of political pluralism.

The discourse about logic is accompanied by another issue belonging to the philosophy of language related to the semantic context of reference of the words, according to which linguistic terms are not endowed and characterized by fixed and immutable meanings, but evolve and assume a complexity adequate to the historical contexts. In the classical times and later, the aims of the laws assumed a quite marginal role in the jurisprudential matters.

The Arabic language, in fact, was considered the main tool to understand and to interpret the sources of *Fiqh*, namely the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. Actually, in the sphere of jurisprudence, both at the level of principles and exegesis, a deep knowledge of the Arabic language represents a necessary condition but could not be considered sufficient. Within the framework of a reflection dedicated to the Islamic political thought it is actually necessary to attribute a fundamental role to the aims and scopes of *Sharī'ah*, which lay behind linguistic issues, reserving a great attention to the values expressed by the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, and considering, at the same time, the social and cultural environment where they should be actually realised.

The consideration of both the purposes and aims of Islamic law will be fundamental also in the context of the reflection on the Islamic political thought. There is no univocal definition of a specific political concept. For example, in relation to the concept of “state”, it should be underlined that the meaning of the word changed in modern times, when it became part of the political lexicon of Arabic language. In many modern dictionaries, in fact, the concept of “state” is defined as follows: “a wider community of individuals, who grow and live in the western

culture, resides permanently in a given territory, enjoy legal personality and a system of government”.

The word “state” in Arabic is translated as “Dawla”, a term which compares in the following Quranic verse: “As for gains granted by Allah to His Messenger from the people of other lands, they are for Allah and the Messenger, his close relatives, orphans, the poor, and needy travellers so that wealth may not merely circulate among your rich. Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is severe in punishment”.¹⁵

The word then, in the forms respectively of “Dawla” and “Duwla”, means both an act of “gathering” or of “territorial conquest”. In the classical Arabic language, consequently, the term does not have a fixed and specific meaning which could be juxtapose to the contemporary use of the word.

The concept of “civil State” has been politicised in the context of the Arab Spring, while the debate has been focused on the nature of contemporary national state. In this regard, several definitions of civil state have been formulated, which sometimes are controversial and mutually incompatible. Some argue that the civil state coincides with the secular state, in which religion is totally separated from politics; while, according to others, it should be identified with the liberal state, which is focused on the rights and freedoms of citizens. Others interpret it as a state ruled by civilians as opposite to the military rule, or they, instead, identify it with the national state vis-à-vis the theocratic state ruled by religious leaders. According to others, the civil state is very close to the Islamic state of Medina at the time of the spreading of the message of Islam and the signing of the constitution of Yathrib.

However, despite the fact that it could not be identified

¹⁵The Holy Quran 59:7.

with a fixed definition, both historical and philosophical, the concept of civil state, it may be argued, constitutes an excellent opportunity to try to reach some sort of agreement inside the community, which could be found in the form of a state ruled by so called “civil values”. These values can, in turn, assume religious, liberal, or socialist form, according to specific times and situations.

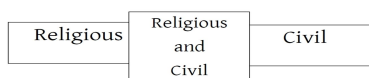
Consequently, the military, as any other institution, cannot be placed above others in the constitution, in the interest of justice and the principles ensuring freedom, rights and equality in front of the law for all the citizens, independently of the religious affiliation. The political ideologies, which have the right to intervene in the definition of “civil state”, become, instead, part of the definition of philosophies, movements and political parties which are identified with the secular, the liberal, or the Islamic approaches.

We should, it can be argued, concentrate on the notion of “contemporary national state”; since the form, which some think could be defined as Islamic state, simply does not exist in our contemporary times. The forces of political parties, which call themselves secular, generally stand for the separation between the church and the state, or the neutrality of the state towards religion and so on. Islamic state cannot, however, one may argue, be included inside the definition of state or in its constitution, but could remain as a political trend, which could take part in the process of governance without monopolising the nature of the civil state.

The same discourse can be applied to the liberal and socialist values as well. In other words, the call to apply some rulings of the *Shari‘ah*, having an effect on the life of all citizens, both Muslims and non-Muslims, before citizens accept it, cannot be included in the definition of state and of its constitution. Instead, it could be kept as a

political trend, contributing to the general politics of the so called “civil state”. If some thinkers refuse these considerations and insist that in the Islamic world and in the different contemporary national states, the application of some aspects of the *Sharī‘ah*’ is legitimate from the historical point of view, we may argue that this is possible only in instances where some sort of agreement or consensus is reached.

Notwithstanding the complexity of this issue, if we want to represent the finality of what is both religious and civil, we can use concentric circles, as in the following picture for the sake of simplicity.



1-The pure religious circle: this area includes the religious rites and elements related to a particular faith, which do not interfere in any way with the structure of the state and of the laws. Examples of these categories are the issues related to the faith and belief, and then, according to the terminology of political science, they are “private matters”.

2-The pure civil circle: this area includes the issues related to the organization of the state and its institutions, in which religion does not have any direct interference: structure of the state, the division of powers, the laws regulating the relations between individuals, the organisations and the communities, which re-enter -especially in the case of Islam- in the context of the issues related to

the daily life and to the non-legislative acts performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his role as the leader.

3-Intersection between religious and civil: this is the area of intersection, where the aims of civil and religious sectors are overlapped. There are, in fact, some religious commandments related to the state, its institutions and the relations between citizens.

The main principles, in relation to these religious dispositions and injunctions, should be translated in the general laws and in the rules and regulations that citizens are called to obey. The intersection between the two areas, the civil and the religious one, raises, at this stage, some problems, since the translation of the religious regulations-in this case, the Islamic ones- in the legislation binding both for Muslims and non-Muslims-needs a detailed discussion.

For example, in the context of the family law, the majority of Arab people-Muslims, Christians, Sunnis, Shias, liberals, conservatives and so on- find problematic the idea of a "civil marriage", that is, the couple marrying without any religious legitimacy of the wedlock.

Then, within the family law and the institutions involved, the jurists should have a deep knowledge of the religious beliefs related to a specific faith. It is necessary, then, to refer to the religious pronouncements accepted by the majority of the people. The same should be said about the issues related to the law of inheritance, the maintenance, the paternity laws, etc. This area, then, implies that the law and the state's institutions should respect the peculiarities of a particular faith.

The area of the intersection between "civil" and "religious" should be subjected to the consensus of the community. The area, on which the community reaches the consensus, is considered functional to its interests, even when it is derived from the Islamic *Shari'ah*. For example, the penalty for first degree murder in the majority of

the Arab countries coincides with the one of premeditated murder according to the Islamic law. Even when it is an Islamic regulation, the community agrees on it and it applies to both for Muslims and non-Muslims. The same can be said about the commands related to the case of immorality or the consumption of intoxicants, which the community again community considers illegal, and that are also accepted as such in several Arab countries.

Besides, the constitutional article, according to which *Shari'ah* is considered a “source” and the “principal source of legislation”, constitutes another example of statute, on which all the community, or at least the majority, finds the consensus, without being at the same time discriminatory towards the rights non-Muslims; in other words, ensuring them their rights.

In relation to the above issues, innovative proposals related to the Islamic *Fiqh* should be able to achieve the consensus, without the laws becoming divisive or discriminatory. One way of doing it is to expand the scope of the system, in the light of the inner purpose of the *Shari'ah*, involving educational and cultural and civilisational aspects, thus going beyond the limited scope of criminal law and the laws related to dos and don'ts.

Islamic values, for example, could be materialised in the community through cultural and charitable institutions. This is the reason why, in fact, the Sunna of the Prophet teaches that the principal factor in this regard is represented by the behavior of the individual rather than the authority of the state.

Several books and researches have been written on what can be properly defined “Islamic in the context of policy, state, government, political parties and resolutions. The adjective “Islamic” appears in several spheres and aspects of our daily life. However, it must be stressed that the following question has been quite rarely asked: what

do we mean when we say that a product, an organisation or an activity can be labelled as “Islamic”?

Most of the time, the things that we could imagine as a part of an “Islamic state”, namely, images, names and designations, are in themselves very far from being “Islamic”, but assumes some features of the official Islam, according to the views of some religious groups, which, even though, are based on the sources themselves as proofs and a models to follow, may sometimes contradict with the same core of the Islamic message, when we go deeper into their nature, especially in the light of the inner principles of the *Sharī‘ah*.

The word “legitimacy” is often employed to promote and support opinions, according to which, to legitimise governments and their actions on the basis of the evidences cited from the Quran and the Sunna. It is, however, necessary to differentiate between what can be qualified as “Islam” and what has got a wider meaning than that of Fatwa and the difference between these two areas is similar to the one existing between the Islamic thought, concentrating the attention on ideas and institutions and the Islamic jurisprudence, which, instead, is interested in specific rules and regulations.

In the second stage, the discussion should be turned to what can be defined as “partial approach to the *Fatwa*”, that restricts its methodology to the context of resolutions of social and gender issues exclusively to the *Fiqh*, without being intellectually and contextually innovative. The *Fātāwā* relating to political issues can have multiple dimensions in an innovative way, addressing the political and socially dynamism, instead of being unifocal or limited in their scope.

In relation to the reference to Islamic history, some suggested to go back to the study of the featured events characterising it from the time of the Rightly Guided Cali-

phs to that one of decadence, in order to discover what decision-making system was actually endorsed at the policy level. However, there is a difference between the legal evidence, which points towards the legitimacy of the government, which has been previously introduced, and the historical proofs indicating the legitimacy of the judgments applied in a particular historical context. This, however, means that the legitimacy falls in the context of jurisprudence, since history itself seems to guarantee the necessary legitimacy. Consequently, some scholars have taken into consideration the determinate conditions and made them binding for the whole Muslim community, independently of the historical and social context in which they live.

The interest towards the historical proofs is related mainly to the issues of Islamic identity, which assumes a central role in the national policy. Islamic identity could be defined as the unicity of the Islamic community, which assumes some special characteristic features with respect to other nations as, for example, language, culture, religion, custom, traditions and values, which since a very long time acquired some nuances defined as “Islamic”.

The scholars agree that history is the most important factor constituting the identity of a nation. This certainly does not mean it to be bound to historically outdated forms in the social practices and in politics; they are there sources or foundations to be used for any further development.

An example of this Islamic nature, which constitutes part of a wider variety of the aspects of the life and identity of the nation of Islam, which always played a great role in the social context, is the system of *Waqf*. It has been recognized that the system of *Waqf* played a great role in the safeguarding of the Islamic values and institutions throughout the history of the *Umma* in several

areas: cultural, educational, health, sanitary and many other areas of public sector.

The reflection dedicated to the concept of “civil state” also raises two issues historically relevant in relation to the notions of Islamic identity and history. The Muslim identity, in the case of the different Islamic countries, is the outcome of a long and complex historical process, when the cultural and historical elements respectively, related and mingled with the strictly “religious” one. The examination of the notion of Islamic “identity” could not avoid, as its condition of possibility, from an analysis of the nature of the relation between culture and revelation, in general terms, and between Arab culture and Quranic revelation, specifically.

The process leading to a definition of “civil state” adequate to the Islamic context, must include a methodological analysis related to the foundation of the concept of “political legitimacy” within an Islamic framework. This research, we may safely assume, seems to proceed on two parallel binaries. This is the reason why, it is necessary to re-examine again the concept of the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, and then to focus the attention on the contemporary political systems, in order to determine if they could be considered compatible with the Islamic principles. This process should be accompanied necessarily to a historical analysis of the early years of the Caliphate and their vicissitudes with a particular attention reserved to the period after the rule of the *Rāshidūn*, when the Caliphate assumed a hereditary character according to the model of the absolute monarchies.

In the aftermath of the conquest of Mecca, different tribes became part of the Islamic community but, after the death of the Prophet, the issues related to the different factions, tribes and groups rose again. The message of Islam was spread out of the Arab peninsula through the

effort of the Companions and the community succeeded in maintaining itself as one nation under the leadership of Abū Bakr al-Siddīq and Umar Al-Khattāb. However, very soon issues related to the different nationalities and people who embraced Islam and became part of the “Umma”, have been raised, at the time of Uthmān ibn ‘Affān and Alī ibn Abī Tālib, while, with Mu‘āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān, the power became hereditary and the *Shūrā* was deprived of every authority, forcing it to play a nearly powerless formal role.

Later, the social injustice, rooted in the preference accorded to one ethnic group over the other, the trade-monopoly, the lack of consultation with other Muslims, who, despite the lack of efficiency and the tyrannical power, did not consider them sufficient reasons to challenge the power, which, in the end, spearheaded violence and tyranny even among the later generations. The Quranic teachings, however, visualised a superior civilisation and its main features, even from an historical point of view, marked the way of reformation, the development and the political pluralism.

Nevertheless, the historical writings and recordings focused mainly on the facts and incidents related to the dynasties and the conflicts, which left a very little space for the considerations related to history of civilization in the form of social, scientific, technical and cultural mobility. In other words, the attention, focused on famous characters and dynasties, overshadowed the internal movements of both societies and civilizations.

The history of the Arab countries is actually described exclusively in relation to conquests, riots and political disorder. Although Ibn Khaldūn’s *Muqaddimah* represents a qualitative development inside historiography, notwithstanding even his historiography reflects a model already present in Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathīr and others. Actually,

the general features of Islamic historiography have been widely overshadowed by the space dedicated to royal dynasties, without considering the economic, cultural or popular features of the different epochs.

In the context of the elaboration of proposals for the renewal of Islamic historiography and to support the idea of pluralism in a “civil State”, first of all, it is necessary to expand the research subjects related to the history of Islam in order to include also other parts of the worlds such as China, India, Eastern Europe, Africa and America. History should be understood and interpreted in a wider perspective involving the military, political, social, scientific, technical and environmental aspects, respectively. A special attention should be dedicated to some specific issues like the dialogue with the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, the gender questions, etc.

In the context of historiography and historical criticism, it is necessary to submit to a careful examination the biased and immaculate image of early and later Islamic history. And, at the same time, however, it is necessary to avoid the exaggerated statements and approaches that present the majority of Muslim political systems as bloodthirsty, tyrannical, ready to employ Islam as a tool to induce people to accept the tyranny fatalistically, after the age of the *Kulafā’ Al-Rāshidūn*.

On the other side, the apologetic approach related to the interpretation of the perfection of political system, especially the European model, reflected in the Islamic policy of the classical time, should be avoided. The Islamic political history, in such apologetic interpretation, is then approached searching all the features of these modern systems in it. This leads to an interpretation of political pluralism in the Islamic history, according to which Islam knew a political pluralism very close and similar to the contemporary democratic one.

The supporters of this point of view interpret the *Shūrā* system, arguing that Muslims invented the parliamentary system, or they read the biography of Umar ibn al-Khattāb, assuming that Muslims, at the historical time, were applying the democratic system of the electoral vote, or conducting the public affairs according to the American model of civil society. However, this tendency, which tries to develop these western concepts and systems on the ground of an Islamic point of view, ends up, at the same time, in justifying and legitimising some features of Islamic history, which could be unhelpful in terms of creating a proper understanding of the Islamic political history.

From the other side, the post-modernist tendency shows the propensity to deconstruct completely Islamic history, which is consequently interpreted as a set of occurrences characterized mainly by the marginalization of more vulnerable people without any trace of positive elements. This tendency, however, places in danger the same Islamic identity and this is the reason why it cannot be considered acceptable.

We may safely argue that we should build a historical framework in which those aspects of Islamic history worthy of praise, especially if they brought humanity as a whole to its vantage, are highlighted. This process, however, should not distract us from the recognition of those aspects that are quite problematic in the Islamic political history; and they should be also subjected to an honest criticism. This recognition, at the same time, also should lead to the reflection and the correction of the mistakes committed in the past, but it cannot constitute the reason for the repudiation of the Islamic history as a whole.

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Early Childhood Education:
An Islamic Perspective in the Light of Iqbal's
Philosophy of Education

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Abstract

Education is the building block for the development of human personality. Children need educational training that not only develops their individuality but prepares them for their vicegerency role to serve their Creator and become a productive member of their society. This qualitative and exploratory study probes the Islamic principles of human nature, learning, and development of human-self for early childhood education in the light of Iqbal's educational philosophy. This analytical approach was selected to justify that the Quranic concepts of human growth and learning have a strong voice to educate children from early childhood. The study concludes that a human self is naturally equipped with an urge and related tools for self-development. Children learn fast due to their human structure based on Fitrah. The main aim of education should therefore be the realization of a strong self through experiential learning to unleash an individual's potentials. Quranic theory of human learning can be derived from Iqbal's explication of the process of development of human self or Khudi.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Islamic Education, Individuality Development, Iqbal's Educational Philosophy, Khudi, Experiential Learning, Natural Education.

Introduction

Children are a trust to be taken care of under our supervision. According to the Prophetic tradition, "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is accountable for his or her flock".¹ As such, any negligence in taking care of the trust could make a detrimental impact on the Muslim community and the society as a whole.²

Early childhood is a time of fast physiological growth, holistic development, and it represents the best opportunity for building the foundation for lifelong learning bearing a significant and lasting impact on the individual.³ This period is thus critical in molding a child's personality, lifelong learning behavior, attitudes, and overall conceptual frameworks.⁴ With the help of some innate psychological forces, the young child is actually capable of self-development without the need for any external intervention, since any undesired interference may lead to poor learning and have some disturbing and unbalancing effects on the child's personality.⁵

¹Muammad b.Ismāil al-Bukhārī, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Dar-us-Salam Hadith, 2015), "Ahkaam", 2 (no.7138).

²Danial Abidin, *7 Formula Individu Cemerlang*. (Kuala Lumpur: PTS Millenia Sdn Bhd. 2008).

³Deniz Kahrman-Ozturk-Refika Olgan et. al., "Preschool Children's Ideas on Sustainable Development: How Preschool Children Perceive Three Pillars of Sustainability with the Regard to 7R", *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice* 12/4 (2012), 2987-2995.

⁴Nazir Qaiser, *Realization of Iqbal's Educational Philosophy in Montessori System* (Lahore: Shirkat Press, 2008).

⁵Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent mind* (Radford: Wilder publications, 2007).

According to the Quran and *Hadith*, every child is born with a pure nature, in the Islamic tradition called *Fitrah*. Such a concept of human nature means that the child is in a complete state of purity which does not involve the presence of any sinful will or intention. Possessing a perfect human nature, the child is designed by the Creator to optimize his existence by fulfilling the purpose of his life leading to success in the Hereafter.⁶

Since the foremost function of education is to nurture the personal growth of a human being, education during early childhood is a crucial responsibility. Education, in fact, helps to achieve perfection in all aspects of personal and social life. In order to achieve a true education from the Islamic perspective, teachers and educators must be inspired by the knowledge of the philosophy and objectives of education as postulated in the Quran and *Sunnah*, respectively.⁷ Actually, these sources are extremely helpful in understanding the purpose of creation, human nature, along with its role and responsibilities, providing also the key to discover the aims of education aiming at facilitating every individual to develop an integrated, balanced, and highly individualized personality.⁸

The potential required for a highly developed individual is ingrained in every human being. According to Iqbal⁹, the human self's latent potentialities demand a

⁶Muhammad Ali Bhat, "Human psychology (*Fitrah*) from Islamic Perspective", *International journal of Nusantara Islam* 4/2 (2016), (Lahore: Shirkat Press, 2008), 61-74.

⁷Muhammad Abid Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2011).

⁸Amina Murad, *Iqbal's educational philosophy: Its implications in early childhood education* (Karachi: Institute of Business Management, 2019).

⁹Muhammad Abid Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's*

process of active learning on the foundations of *Tawheed*. This requires educational aims which develop an emotional attachment to Islam and enable young children to be conscious of their responsibility towards the Creator.¹⁰ Islam lays great stress on good early childhood upbringing and care, protecting the child from physical, psychological and social conditions detrimental for his well-being and future development. In fact, helping the young child to become a righteous citizen who has a sense of belonging to his or her people, society and homeland is of supreme importance.¹¹

However, the contemporary early childhood education system does not fulfill the previously explained aims and no serious work has been done in this regard. Herrera¹² maintains that, despite having the power, the Muslim governments failed to develop a truly Islamic educational system and blindly followed the Western model without adapting it according to the need and aspirations of their citizens. As such, serious work needs to be done to formulate a system in the educational field from an Islamic perspective.

This paper seeks to explore early childhood education from the Islamic perspective on the light of the educational philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the most notable Muslim poet and philosopher of the East. Allama Muhammad Iqbal presented his educational philosophy, while discussing new ideas inspired by Islamic

educational philosophy.

¹⁰Muhammad Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (Lahore: Ashraf press, 1975).

¹¹Farida Ali-Akila Belembaogo et al., *Children in Islam: Their care, upbringing and protection. The Islamic International Centre for Demographic Studies and Research*. (Cairo: Al-Azhar University, 2005).

¹²Linda Herrera, "Education, Islam and modernity: Beyond westernization and centralization", *Comparative Education Review* 48/3 (2004), 318-326.

teachings on human nature and the development of individuals with high level of self-actualization that are capable of transforming both the self and the society. Iqbal's ideas have been accepted by all segments of society as they are in compliance with the Quranic principles, and have been highly appreciated by the Western scholars as well.¹³ Since many books have been written to confirm the relevance of Iqbal's ideas with Quranic wisdom,¹⁴ they are suitable as a point of reference when education is considered in terms of Islamic principles.

The study seeks to explore the educational ideas from the Islamic perspective in the light of Iqbal's philosophy of education, applicable to early childhood education. Which are the ideas, from the Islamic perspective, in the light of Iqbal's philosophy of education applicable to early childhood?

This study is qualitative and exploratory and intends to apply Quranic ideas on human nature, learning, and development of human-self through education and its implications in early childhood learning. The study also explores Iqbal's ideas of the development of individuality as presented both in poetry and prose. Finally, the aim of this study is to promote a new educational model aspiring to have a positive impact on both the individual and the society as well.

The creation of a human being is the most significant event as vividly described in the Holy Quran. Allah (God) Almighty proclaimed man as a vicegerent on earth whose creation was announced to the angels:

"Just think when your Lord said to the angels "Lo! I

¹³Husain Bilgrami, *Glimpses of Iqbal's mind and thought: Brief lectures on Iqbal delivered at London, Cambridge and Oxford* (Lahore: Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1966).

¹⁴Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal and Quranic Wisdom* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2006).

*am about to place a vicegerent on earth.”*¹⁵

Though the role is monumental, the Quran describes the humble physical beginning of a human being, depicting the process of his creation. However, the verses end in the Glory of the Creator as the Best among all the creators highlighting His most coveted creation:

*“And certainly, did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.”*¹⁶

Despite this humble form, the human being’s overall creation is described as the best of all designs.

*“We have indeed created man in the best of fashion.”*¹⁷

The most important ingredient in such a weak, yet a perfect design, is the capacity to learn and develop. Iqbal elucidates¹⁸ that such a creative design of a human being is due to the challenging role assigned to him being Creator’s representative on earth.

*“Then Allah taught Adam the names of all things.”*¹⁹

By his honorable position as *Khalifah*, Allah Almighty granted man with knowledge, power, and authority to conquer, manage and preserve the earth in its original form,

¹⁵ *Tafheem-ul-Qur’an*, trans. Syed Abul Ala Maududi (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2009), al-Baqarah 2/30.

¹⁶ al-Mu’mīnūn 23/12-14.

¹⁷ at-Tīn 95/4.

¹⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thoughts in Islam* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1989).

¹⁹ al-Baqarah 2/31.

namely free from disorder and lack of balance. However, such a position and power is meant to be judiciously used according to the guidance provided by Allah Almighty through His messengers. According to Mawdudi²⁰, such status only made man a deputy of His Lord who must exercise his authority with utmost caution. The hermeneutical interpretation of the following verse also explains that the angels' concern for some of the human beings' undesirable attitudes, while Allah, the All-Wise, was aware of the positive things that humanity is capable of performing on earth.²¹

Despite this humble form, the human being's overall creation is described as the best of all designs.

*They said: "Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?-while we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your Holy (Names)?" He said: "I know what you know not."*²²

The Creator thus commanded that human beings should not try to change their nature.

*"Adhere to the Fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. There should be no change in the creation of Allah."*²³

Preserving the *Fitrah* is important as every human being is born to fulfill the assigned responsibilities once he accepted the challenge to take care of the Creator's trust:

"We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the

²⁰ *Tafheem-ul-Qur'an*.

²¹ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of The Quran* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980) 102-104.

²² al-Baqarah 2/30.

²³ ar-Rūm 30/30.

Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it- he was indeed unjust and foolish.”²⁴

The Holy Quran refers also to human beings being bestowed with the knowledge of *Rab*, the Creator, when they collectively took an oath and accepted Allah Almighty as their Supreme Lord:

“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I, not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we have testified.’ [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.”²⁵

Thus, the human self must be facilitated to fulfill his purpose of life and play his role as the vicegerent on earth by the worship and service due to the Creator:

“I have not created the Jinn and man but that they should serve Me.”²⁶

Furthermore, every human self has been facilitated in several ways to perform these obligations:

“And indeed, We have honored the progeny of Adam and carried them across land and sea and provided them with good things for their sustenance and exalted them above many of our creatures.”²⁷

Conclusively, the human self must remember his humble origin, his Supreme Creator, and the lofty purpose of his creation and designated role:

“He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, cre-

²⁴al-'Ahzāb 33/72.

²⁵al-'A'rāf 7/172.

²⁶al-Dhāriyāt 51/56.

²⁷al-'Isrā' 17/70.

*ation after creation, within three darknesses. That is Allah, your Lord; to Him belongs dominion. There is no deity except Him, so how are you averted?"*²⁸

Importance of Early Childhood Education

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Every child is born but on this *Fitrah* (natural disposition) so long as he does not express himself with his tongue."²⁹ *Fitrah*, being the uncorroborated state, the child maintains this nature until consciously acknowledges his bond with the Creator and consequently develops the faith. Such a state means that the child is born pure, sinless, and predisposed to believe in one God. This makes Islam the religion of human nature.³⁰ This places the laws and teachings of Islam and human nature in harmony with each other, while any artificial intervention, which contravenes human nature, will create an unbalance and disarmony, as Quran clearly says:

*"And who is better in obedience (in Deen) than he who resigns himself to Allah?"*³¹

The process of learning starts even before birth.³² Early childhood is, in fact, a crucial period for healthy brain development as it forms the basis for sensory and perceptual systems through which children learn language,

²⁸al-Zumar 39/6.

²⁹Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab (Dar-us-Salam Hadith, 2007), "Alqadr", 6 (no. 38).

³⁰Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar'u Ta'arud al 'Aql wa al Naql*, ed. M. R. Sa'im (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imām Muhammad ibn Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, 1981) 8, 382-383.

³¹Julie Mennella, Julie-Coren Jagnow-Gary Beauchamp, "Prenatal and Postnatal Flavor Learning by Human Infants", *Pediatrics* 107 (2001), 1-6.

³²Adrienne Tierney-Charles Nelson III, "Brain development and the role of experience in the early years." *Zero to three* 30/2 (2009) 9.

social behavior, and emotions. Hence it is important that early childhood provides them with experiences that facilitate their growth and development in these areas.³³ Tierney underscores the importance of cognitive development, which is at its greatest intensity from 0 to 3 years and requires active and utmost care. During the next three years, the child consciously works towards absorbing knowledge and experience from the environment, whereas, in the next phase of development, he has a natural urge for grouping through some sort of organized activity.³⁴ The early childhood years are therefore crucial for caretakers as this period provides them with a unique opportunity to assist the child during his social, intellectual, emotional, and physical development.³⁵

The body of research implies that children begin to develop their moral intelligence much earlier in life against Piaget's view that moral orientation of equality and fairness occurs during the late childhood period only. Mutual respect also emerges in the early years.³⁶ This is supported by a UNESCO report³⁷ that early childhood education immensely contributes to cultivating ethos, behavior, and skills and enhances performance to achieve sustainable progress at the national level. Ali³⁸ observes that young children's display of dynamic aspects of the human-self slows down with time due to growing out of childhood and other impeding factors such as external interventions

³³Montessori, *The Absorbent mind*.

³⁴Qaiser, *Realization of Iqbal's Educational Philosophy in Montessori System*.

³⁵Elliot Turiel, "Moral development in the early years: When and how", *Human development* 61, (2018) 297-308.

³⁶UNESCO, *EFA global monitoring report 2015- Education for all 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges* (Paris: UNESCO 2015).

³⁷Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy*.

³⁸Syed Qutb, *Fizilal al Qur'an* (Beirut: Darul-Shuruq 1979).

and the prevalent education system. Since human beings are capable of distinguishing between good and bad, they also possess the ability to redirect themselves on the same scale. However, these potentials can be influenced also by their environmental factors, education, and life experiences.³⁹

Education as a Natural Process

Iqbal⁴⁰ considers the development of self (*Khudi*) as a very strong urge, since it is naturally embedded in each individual, leading him or her to develop activities, resulting in new learning and growth. The intensity of this urge for self-development determines the magnitude of learning and growth; the greater the wish, the greater is the learning. Rafiuddin⁴¹ asserts that without this impulse, the organism's growth in any dimension of life is simply impossible. Since modern science ignored the deep features of human features, human civilization seems to be prone to decay.⁴² Therefore, understanding the nature of reality and that of the human being is a prerequisite for developing any educational philosophy.⁴³

Many critics of the contemporary education system underline the lack of importance given to the child's nature along with the presence of an undue interference by adults which resulted in an adverse effect on the natural learning ability and curiosity of young children.⁴⁴ Ac-

³⁹Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁴⁰Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁴¹Muhammad Rafiuddin, *First principles of education* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1983).

⁴²William McDougall, *World chaos: The responsibility of science* (London: Taylor Francis, 2014).

⁴³Alistair Ross, *A European education: Citizenship, identities and young people* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham books Ltd., 2008).

⁴⁴John Holt, *How children learn* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2017).

cording to Rousseau,⁴⁵ the process of formal education has eradicated the nature out of children, at the same time, discouraging self-realization and promoting instead mass behavior. Robinson⁴⁶ according to a similar perspective, considers education as an organic process since every young child has an innate potential, which he calls element. When nurtured in a conducive environment, this element provides the young heart with a true sense of happiness and self-worth allowing the child to tap into his or her own primal source of energy.

On the basis of this general theory, Iqbal⁴⁷ has actually criticized the current education system which may teach how to worship the Creator but does not facilitate at all the experience of the true and inner act of worship. Furthermore, he reiterates that all opportunities for the self to grow lie in the natural, the material, the secular, respectively, which make the world a 'holy ground'.⁴⁸ When a human being is fulfilling the purpose of his creation and existence, he feels that the obligation to serve his Creator is part of his natural inclination. Such a tendency to serve and worship one's Creator is *Deen*, whereas in the religious context it is the natural state or *Fitrah* of a human being. At this point, *Deen* and *Fitrah* become synonymous which brings harmony and equilibrium in human-self due to the realization of what is inherent in one's true nature. Inversely, the opposite situation brings conflict and dissonance as it is inconsistent to the real nature of the human-self.⁴⁹

⁴⁵Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: On education*, trans. Allan Bloom, (London: Penguin, 1991)

⁴⁶Ken Robinson, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2009).

⁴⁷Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thoughts in Islam*.

⁴⁸Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thoughts in Islam*, 182.

⁴⁹Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The concept of Islamic education* (Makkah: First World Conference on Muslim Education, 1977).

According to Iqbal's educational philosophy, education must provide the child with the freedom to interact, experience, and invade the material world.⁵⁰ Young children are highly gifted and eager to employ their intelligence and freedom of action to discover the Signs of their Creator in the nature and in the world around them.⁵¹ Challenge and curiosity to learn and gain knowledge about the world are, in fact, inherent features during early childhood. Furthermore, Rahman⁵² has warned for the cautious use of this independence and autonomy in the human sphere of work on earth, knowledge to discover the secrets of the universe through education, research, and experience, learn to explain the forces of nature for his benefit, and gain mastery over them according to his requirements and plan. Though Iqbal appreciates the West for its action based on "scientific observation and interpretation of phenomena",⁵³ he has also criticized the Western model of education, because it has disconnected human beings from their Creator. A true education will help children to channelize all their actions through spiritual connection with their Creator, service and obedience, and maintain their original self or *Fitrah* and dignified psychological status that make them superior to angels and other creations.⁵⁴

*"We have honored the sons of Adam; provide them transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favors above a great part of our creation."*⁵⁵

⁵⁰Mian Muhammad Tufail, *Iqbal's philosophy and education* (Lahore: The Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1966).

⁵¹Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, 55.

⁵²Fazlur Rahman, *Encyclopedia of Seerah* (London: Seerah Foundation. 1988) 6, 9-10.

⁵³Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*, 12.

⁵⁴S. M. Al-Attas, *The concept of Islamic education*.

⁵⁵al-'Isrā' 17/70.

However, such an honorable position and favor last as long as the human self struggles to maintain it, otherwise he will be disgraced to the lowest in the ladder of creations, since the freedom to choose honor or disgrace has been left in the hands of human beings.⁵⁶ The Holy Quran warns:

*“Then We degrade him to the lowest of the low.”*⁵⁷

Iqbal complains⁵⁸ of the school and *maktab* systems that rob children’s freedom to form lofty ideals and unravel their self-actualization. This is due to their limited beliefs about learning which make the children slaves of the mundane set of instructions thought in schools and *maktab*, at the same time, depriving them of divergent learning experiences, which help them to perform and reach high goals:

*“Iqbal! Do not mention here the science of Ego (Khudi) Such theses are not suitable for schools. It is better for the poor wagtails the state and stations of the hawk are hidden.”*⁵⁹

The development of individuality is therefore an indispensable task of education as the responsibility of vice-regency cannot be performed without developing a highly dynamic individual.⁶⁰ At the same time, the dynamic aspect of the Creator’s Self is manifested in His ever-changing universe:

⁵⁶ Abbas Razak, *Contribution of Iqbal’s Dynamic personality Theory to Islamic Psychology: A Contrastive Analysis with Freud and Selective Mainstream Western Psychology* (Kualalumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2011).

⁵⁷ al-Tīn 95/5.

⁵⁸ Muhammad Iqbal *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, ed. Syed Talib Hussain Bukhari, (Lahore: Istaqlal Press, 1990).

⁵⁹ Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, 591.

⁶⁰ Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*.

*“Every day doth some new work employ Him.”*⁶¹

Consequently, a highly developed self is bound to be creative due to nearness to his Creator. As such, the responsibility of vicegerency cannot be performed without the free exercise of creativity and individuality. According to Iqbal⁶², creative activity is a sign of freedom whereas repetition being its opposite, manifests mechanical action. Since Science seeks to validate the laws of mechanical repetition, it is not possible to validate the creative activity of life in terms of mechanism. As a result, science cannot understand life.

Children during the early childhood period are highly creative and curious with a spark of desire in their eyes and movements. They explore the secrets of nature as their life is free from the confines of discrimination.⁶³ Robinson⁶⁴ appreciates the capacity of innovation and creativity in young children due to their willingness to make mistakes without fear, which is actually the greatest barrier to self-discovery. According to Iqbal,⁶⁵ creativity and the challenging nature of the human self, demands the continuous formation of new ideas. To motivate children, Iqbal uses interesting analogies that appeal to them, such as the honey bee flying from flower to flower. Iqbal then compares honey bees with children, honey with knowledge, and books with flowers and motivates young children to work hard like a honey bee, loving books and pursuing knowledge.⁶⁶

⁶¹al-Hashr 59/29.

⁶²Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*.

⁶³Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, 97.

⁶⁴Ken Robinson, *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative* (West Sussex: Capstone Publishing Ltd, 2011).

⁶⁵Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁶⁶Syed Fakir Waheeduddin, *Rozgar-i-Faqeer* (Lahore: Islami Publishing Company, 1964) 398-399, 591.

Education as a Social Process

According to Tufail,⁶⁷ Iqbal⁶⁸ views education as a social process and an institution where education policies differ according to the societies they cater to. Iqbal argues that an educational system must define the type of qualities that the society needs to instill in pupils according to its values and ideals. This modification is important for the preservation of self as an individual needs dynamic interaction with communal life to grow to its fullest potential. Such growth cannot take place in isolation.⁶⁹ According to Iqbal,⁷⁰ as a member of the ideal community, when the individual follows the twin principles of conflict and harmony, he can fully express one's self. At the same time, the community also reaches its perfect state due to its self-affirming individuals. According to this perspective, the community does not become an obstacle for self-realization; instead, it provides individuals with a fair challenge. Montessori⁷¹ also endorses the importance of social experiences during the early childhood period for an effective intellectual and personality development. According to her, children during this very important stage of their life learn social skills such as compassion, cooperation, imitation, and responsibility throughout mutual interaction.

Iqbal⁷² firmly believes that the fundamental part of an education system that serves Muslims is *Tawheed* - the oneness of God, which can change the destiny of both the self and the society. Belief in the Oneness of Allah

⁶⁷Tufail, *Iqbal's philosophy and education*

⁶⁸Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*, 591.

⁶⁹Razak, *Contribution of Iqbal's Dynamic personality Theory to Islamic Psychology*.

⁷⁰Muhammad Iqbal, *The secrets of the selflessness* trans. J. Arberry Arthur (London: John Murray, 1953).

⁷¹Montessori, *The Absorbent mind*.

⁷²Iqbal, *The secrets of the selflessness*.

Almighty ensures in fact the achievement of sublime ideals like freedom, equality, unity, social order, and solidarity.

For Iqbal, educating the self in the faith of *Tawheed* could make an immense impact on society as it unleashes the hidden powers of the self to explore the physical world. As a result of this interaction, both self and society reap great benefits.⁷³ Through education, then, society ensures the active participation of the young child in the community life and provides him or her with a wholesome environment conducive to character building, growth of personality, and skill development for occupation in adult life.⁷⁴ Education will therefore be meaningful when the beliefs and values of the society it serves are defined along with the qualities that it desires to instill in its people. Grigg⁷⁵ maintains that historically, education and the concept of being civilized and knowledgeable were purely rooted in faith. When inspirational and faith-based quotes, prayers, and stories are a part of the curriculum, the young child does not need extra effort to put into making him understand and follow the religion. This gives a message to the child that religion is part of life and not isolated from it. Mawdudi⁷⁶ has asserted that the vision of education and religion is the same as it has a profound effect on the development of a God-fearing society and individuals with critical and analytical minds. Such a holistic system accepts the value of physical and social sciences and depends on them to complete the enigma of knowledge and benefit society.

Iqbal has explicitly warned against imitating a foreign education system, which may prove fatal in the realm of

⁷³Iqbal, *The secrets of the selflessness* 35.

⁷⁴Tufail, *Iqbal's philosophy and education*.

⁷⁵Russell Grigg, *Becoming an outstanding primary school teacher* (Harlow: Longman 2010).

⁷⁶Syed Mawdudi, *The education*, trans. S. M. Rauf, (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2000).

its nation's philosophy of life and its ideals, norms, and values.⁷⁷ Iqbal has expressed grievances over the nature of the soul-less Western education system of his time, while he has likened the East to a leper who has lost his exterior beauty.

Education of the Functions of Self

Since life is highly individual, individuality of every human is self-activated and self-motivated.⁷⁸ Each individual will be responsible for his actions on the Day of Judgment as mentioned in the Quran:

*"Whoever chooses to follow the right path, for his soul does he go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only does he go astray; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear a burden of the other, nor do We chastise until We send an Apostle to them."*⁷⁹

Every child is a dynamic entity, whose actions can be exploited and translated into productive and creative acts.⁸⁰ Although the self (*Khudi*) is blessed with inherent creative powers and spirituality, these aspects have been neglected by the modern educators resulting in a soul-less and dry educational patterns and models.⁸¹ The stability of self is directly proportional to self-realization, therefore parents and teachers must be aware of the function of the self as the formation of ideals for its development, as the continuation of life depends on it.⁸² Love and desire for

⁷⁷Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy*.

⁷⁸Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁷⁹al-'Isrā' 17/15.

⁸⁰Montessori, *The Absorbent mind*.

⁸¹Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁸²Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy*.

an ideal lead both to an highly dynamic self, and in their absence the child will be unable to use his natural faculties and tools. All developments in the field of culture, science and arts are the result of the powerful application of human faculties and tools. Ali⁸³ suggests using such methodologies in education, which develop passion and motivation in young minds and hearts. As such, Iqbal has laid great stress on the development of self as the prime aim of education, preferred over all other aims and activities.⁸⁴

Iqbal⁸⁵ is convinced that without a positive active life, the self will get involved in self-destructive activities and unable to grow and survive. The stability of life depends upon a stable self which is the outcome of the continuous growth and development in the form of experiential learning activities that bring forth the hidden potentialities of an individual. Young children must be involved in creative activities and allowed trial and error to develop self-realization of their latent abilities. A highly developed personality is therefore the manifestation of a strong *Khudi* in perpetual action. Conclusively, learning, and education is much more than mere attainment of a body of concepts; it is the manifestation of self-development.⁸⁶

⁸³Ali, *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy*.

⁸⁴Khwaja Saiyidain, *Iqbal's education philosophy* (Lahore: Ashraf Press. 1971).

⁸⁵Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁸⁶Murad, *Iqbal's educational philosophy: Its implications in early childhood education*.

Conclusion

Early childhood period is a state of human purity with an enormous appetite for learning, growth and development. The Islamic teachings lay great stress on the importance of early childhood as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) instructed to keep a good name and give good education.⁸⁷ Honoring children can be achieved only through providing them with a sound upbringing, good education based on Islamic principles, science and ethics that help them to avoid adverse effects on their behavior in society or to deviate from righteousness.⁸⁸

Being in a state of *Fitrah*, children during early childhood have strong internal and external self and appreciate their individuality by exploring their environment. Since they are closer to nature, this stage of life is the best one to provide a sound education on the foundations of *Tawheed*.⁸⁹ Any objectionable concepts in education should be rejected, while the intellectual, along with poets and writers, should develop a literature focused on the reawakening of Muslim community and design curricular material depicting *Tawheed* as the motivational force for children.⁹⁰ At the same time, Iqbal⁹¹ recommends flexibility in education by allowing continuous reconstruction of curricula to keep pace with the ever-changing world. Consequently, education system should have the capacity

⁸⁷Muammad b. Abd Allāh Khatib Al-Tabrizi, *Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, trans. Muhammed Mahdi Al-Sharif (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2012), "Nikah", 2 (no. 3138).

⁸⁸Farida Ali-Akila Belembaogo et al., *Children in Islam: Their care, upbringing and protection*.

⁸⁹Murad, Iqbal's educational philosophy: Its implications in early childhood education.

⁹⁰Ali, An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy.

⁹¹Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*.

to transform itself according to its new demands.

Experiential learning is an important aspect of early childhood education as young children are eager to unleash their hidden potentialities through active learning.⁹² Experiences play a pivotal role in providing a sound education as early childhood experiences develop brain and its related functions in a much different way than the later year experiences.⁹³ Young children are not afraid to make mistakes, give importance to their likes and demand self-respect which is supported by the Prophetic tradition teaching to be just and respectful towards one's children.⁹⁴

Every child has a strong sense of individuality as according to Iqbal,⁹⁵ individuality is highly original, challenging and in continuous clash with the environment for its growth. Education being a social process, children need experiences that develop strong bonding with the community, therefore Ali recommends social responsibility as one of the aims of education, and children should be taught the ideals of justice, community service, in order to develop an appropriate relation with society that make them good and beneficial Muslim citizens.

Endowed with such natural dispositions, children during their early years actively pursue activities to find their own ways towards physical, spiritual and emotional growth and maturation. They are eager and self-learners inquisitive of the natural phenomena such as mountains, clouds with keen observation and questions. Such a challenging

⁹²Murad, *Iqbal's educational philosophy: Its implications in early childhood education*.

⁹³Tierney, Adrienne L., and Charles A. Nelson III, "Brain development and the role of experience in the early years."

⁹⁴Abu Dawood Sulaiman bin Ash'ath, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, trans. Yasir Qadhi (Dar-us-Salam Hadith, 2008), "Al-Ijarah", 1282 (no. 3416).

⁹⁵Khurram Murad, *The heart and the Qur'an*. Retrieved November 15, 2018, from <https://www.islamicity.com> (2011).

nature is due to their heart which is full of passion and desires to conquer the secrets of the universe.⁹⁶ Due to their self-motivated nature, education process should be original and organic allowing children to grow and happily live out of their comfort zone.⁹⁷ Iqbal⁹⁸ considers the creative activity as a means to self-realization. To a young child, learning is a concrete and continuous phenomenon that requires a favorable environment with ample opportunities to experience the undiscovered world around (Figure 1).⁹⁹



Conclusively, every individual self is uniquely designed as vicegerent on earth with an inherently ability to create and the capacity to shape his or her own destiny.¹⁰⁰ Children during their early years are dynamically engaged in self-development. As the child's challenging nature desires and searches to form ideals, his passion and desire

⁹⁶Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, 55.

⁹⁷Robinson, *Robinson, Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*.

⁹⁸Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

⁹⁹Murad, *Iqbal's educational philosophy: Its implications in early childhood education*.

¹⁰⁰Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

for them developed in the heart, at the same time, stimulate his individuality to involve in meaningful activities to achieve the same.¹⁰¹ Therefore experiential learning is important as it allows the child to use all his cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual faculties for learning and growth.¹⁰² The young child's heart is a bundle of desire for challenge and curiosity, as this far the child has not yet accepted any external influences.¹⁰³

There are many more principles of Islamic education given in the Quran as well as in Iqbal's educational thoughts. The researcher therefore recommends further research in these areas to deduce more recommendations for early childhood education as well as education at all levels.

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¹⁰¹Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

¹⁰²Iqbal, *The secrets of the self*.

¹⁰³Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*.

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Muhammad Iqbal e *La ricostruzione del pensiero religioso nell'Islam*: brevi riflessioni

Abdel Latif Chalikandi

Abstract

L'opera filosofica di Muhammad Iqbal inaugura una nuova fase del pensiero islamico che va al di là dell'epoca in cui è stata sia pensata che composta. Le riflessioni contenute nell'opera intitolata The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam non sono state infatti ancora pienamente comprese dagli studiosi sia musulmani che non nel loro reale valore filosofico che sembra trascendere la differenza tra le civiltà e le prospettive storiche, culturali e religiose che distinguono l'Oriente e l'Occidente.

Keywords: Muhammad Iqbal, filosofia islamica, teologia islamica, pensiero occidentale, riforma del pensiero islamico.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), conosciuto nell'Asia meridionale come il poeta-filososo d'Oriente, è considerato quasi all'unanimità uno dei più originali pensatori musulmani che siano emersi nel sub-continente indiano dopo Sha Waliullah di Delhi (1703-1762), studioso e riformatore religioso del XVIII secolo.¹ Questi studiosi sono accumulati

¹Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shāh Walī-Allāh and His Times. A study of Eighteenth Century Islam, Politics and Society in India* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004).

da una visione dinamica dell'Islam proposta e spiegata in molte delle loro opere, a loro volta radicate in una profonda comprensione dell'Islam ed il suo ruolo nel mondo moderno.

Sha Waliullah è vissuto nel periodo in cui la secolare struttura politica del potere musulmano in India era ormai entrata in un processo di profonda disgregazione a seguito della morte dell'imperatore Mughal Aurangzeb nel 1707 e durante il regno dei suoi incapaci successori, che mostrarono invece una mancanza di visione politica di ampio respiro che si mostrò nel tempo estremamente pericolosa per la conservazione del potere politico musulmano nel subcontinente.

Iqbal, circa un secolo e mezzo dopo, nei primi decenni del ventesimo secolo, si è trovato in una situazione politica che, sotto molteplici aspetti, può essere considerata simile. La maggior parte delle terre musulmane era stata occupata dai poteri coloniali ed il loro contributo intellettuale alla nascita del mondo moderno e contemporaneo era diminuita drasticamente a causa dell'incapacità di reagire in modo proficuo al progresso scientifico e tecnologico ed ai mutamenti culturali che aveva comportato.

Come reazione verso questa critica situazione intellettuale, Iqbal discute nell'opera intitolata *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*² le problematiche relative al rapporto tra Islam e mondo moderno. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, una opera composta da una serie di conferenze tenute in lingua inglese nell'India Britannica tra il 1928 ed il 1932 su invito della *Madras Muslim Association*, in Madras, Aligarh ed Hyderabad, è stata tradotta in diverse lingue: arabo, francese, tedesco, spagnolo, italiano³, turco, persiano ed urdu.

²Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2006).

³Muhammad Iqbal, *La ricostruzione del pensiero religioso*

Al tempo in cui Iqbal ha tenuto queste conferenze, la maggior parte del mondo islamico si trovava sotto l'occupazione dei paesi occidentali. Dal momento che i musulmani si trovavano sotto la dominazione politica dell'Occidente, erano considerati dei popoli sottomessi e la relazione dominante nella struttura politica, che esisteva tra il mondo musulmano e l'Occidente, era quella di tipo coloniale.

Nel mondo contemporaneo, invece, decenni dopo la fine del potere coloniale sul mondo islamico, milioni di musulmani appartenenti alle diverse nazioni e culture vivono nella maggior parte dei paesi occidentali come cittadini dotati di pieni diritti politici e civili. Dal momento che l'Islam sia come religione che come esperienza sia storica che culturale sembra costituire una delle maggiori forze unificanti nelle vite dei musulmani che vivono in Occidente, la conoscenza del modo in cui Muhammad Iqbal, uno dei principali pensatori del mondo moderno, ha articolato il significato e la visione del mondo islamica riveste un'importanza centrale nell'Occidente multiculturale.

La prospettiva filosofica e la vita stessa di Iqbal possono essere considerate come una risposta ispirata e creativa ad una delle domande più impellenti del mondo moderno, ossia la relazione tra Islam ed Occidente o la presenza dell'Islam e la sua visione del mondo nello spazio pubblico occidentale. Iqbal era un musulmano praticante ma anche un pensatore di ampio respiro e prospettiva, e poteva vantare una solida conoscenza della teologica, della filosofia e della giurisprudenza islamica.

Iqbal dovette affrontare sia come uomo che come pensatore il dilemma di vivere come un musulmano in un mondo così diverso da quello dei primi secoli della storia islamica relativamente alle nuove scoperte scientifiche, alle nuove domande relative ai diritti politici e civili, ai diritti

nell'Islam, trans. Sabrina Lei (Roma: Tawasul International, 2017).

delle donne ed al ruolo della *Shariah* nel mondo moderno.

Iqbal, invece di ignorare tutte queste domande e sfide intellettuali e rimanere ancorato alla visione medievale dei giuristi del passato, ha esaminato e riflettuto su questo dilemma alla luce della situazione moderna ed ha proposto dei nuovi approcci e punti di vista. Per questa ragione, Iqbal si è rivolto, nella ricerca di un'ispirazione costante, al Corano ed alla Sunna del Profeta, leggendoli non alla luce ma parallelamente all'eredità filosofica dell'Occidente. Come lui stesso afferma nella prefazione all'opera *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, lo scopo della sua riflessione filosofica e del suo impegno intellettuale era quello di rispondere in modo positivo al bisogno impellente di una forma scientifica di conoscenza religiosa: "...by attempting to construct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent developments in the domains of human knowledge".⁴

Il lettore e lo studioso attento dell'opera di Iqbal non possono evitare di riconoscere che l'articolazione della ricostruzione del pensiero religioso nell'Islam viene intrapresa dalla prospettiva del Corano, della vita del Profeta e dell'e-redità islamica interpretate alla luce degli sviluppi moderni, al fine di elaborare una sintesi sia per i musulmani che per i non-musulmani. Come pensatore, Iqbal non fonda la propria riflessione filosofica sul conflitto perpetuo tra Islam e Occidente e non promuove un completo rifiuto dell'Occidente, ma piuttosto auspica una sintesi costruttiva a beneficio di entrambi.

Nell'ambito delle questioni relative ad alcuni aspetti della storia occidentale, la prospettiva di Iqbal offre allo stesso Occidente una visione del mondo condivisibile in relazione ad alcune pressanti problematiche che sembrano

⁴Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Preface, 21.

essere rimaste irrisolte nello spazio sia culturale che politico occidentale ossia: la natura ed il significato dell'esperienza propriamente religiosa, il ruolo della religione sia nello spazio pubblico che in quello privato, la relazione tra scienza e religione e tra l'ambito spirituale e materiale dell'esistenza.

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam si compone di sette capitoli, ognuno dei quali discute un tema particolare, anche se tutte le problematiche discusse sono articolate ed interconnesse al tema della ricostruzione del pensiero religioso dell'Islam all'interno del suo stesso ambito. Sebbene la scrittura di Iqbal sia chiara e precisa, è dotata nello stesso tempo di una profondità di contenuto speculativo che rende difficile una comprensione immediata, senza dedicare una lettura attenta al testo. La prosa di Iqbal è molto densa, ma quando si riesce ad entrare nell'ottica del testo, il lettore può godere di una visione ispirata in molte questioni relative al destino degli esseri umani.

La prima lezione, intitolata la "Conoscenza dell'esperienza religiosa" esamina la religione e la sua esperienza alla luce delle verità filosofiche e scientifiche. La religione però non è considerata sottomessa alla filosofia o alla scienza, ma rappresenta un sistema completo che comprende la vita umana nella sua totalità o nelle parole stesse di Iqbal costituisce un'espressione dell'essere umano nella sua interezza. Iqbal ha discusso anche la questione relativa al pensiero, all'intuizione ed all'esperienza mistica nel tentativo di spiegare l'esperienza religiosa e la questione legata alla conoscenza.

Nella seconda lezione intitolata "La prova filosofica della rivelazione dell'esperienza religiosa", Iqbal propone delle riflessioni interessanti in merito alla filosofia scolastica, argomentando che le tre prove classiche dell'esistenza di Dio -cosmologica, teleologica ed ontologica- non possono essere considerate adeguate per ragioni sia di ordine

logico che ontologico. Iqbal individua il fallimento principale della filosofia scolastica nella presenza di un dualismo di pensiero ed essere nelle argomentazioni filosofiche a sostegno, che può essere risolto all'unità attraverso un'interpretazione critica dell'esperienza, riconducendola all'unità della Realtà Ultima.

Nella terza lezione intitolata "La concezione di Dio ed il significato della preghiera", Iqbal propone una profonda meditazione su Dio, la natura e l'esperienza spirituale della preghiera nell'Islam. Iqbal sottolinea che, secondo i termini della rivelazione coranica, Dio possiede le seguenti caratteristiche: individualità, potenza creatrice, conoscenza, onnipotenza ed eternità. La lezione si conclude con la discussione concernente la spiegazione razionale di questi elementi e la relazione intrattenuta con il significato e la dimensione della preghiera.

Nella quarta lezione intitolata "L'Io; la sua libertà ed immortalità" Iqbal esamina l'individualità e la condizione dell'essere umano inteso come vicario di Dio sulla terra, un ruolo che può essere rivestito solo da un essere dotato di un'intrinseca libertà che gli consente di agire e di lasciare un segno nella storia. Questa lezione può essere comunque letta in continuità con la quinta intitolata "Lo spirito della cultura musulmana" che si apre con l'esame della natura dell'esperienza mistica e profetica. L'argomentazione procede sottolineando il dinamismo dell'esperienza profetica che si colloca in una dimensione opposta a quella mistica, che avvolge colui che ne fa esperienza nella spirale dell'illuminazione personale. La differenza tra la natura dell'esperienza profetica e mistica costituisce la premessa dell'argomentazione di Iqbal relativa alla missione del Profeta Muhammad ed al suo dinamismo in ambito sia culturale che intellettuale.

Nella sesta lezione intitolata "Il principio del movimento nella struttura dell'Islam", Iqbal passa da un argo-

mento prettamente filosofico ad uno di natura giurisprudenziale in quanto la sua riflessione si concentra su di un tema che ha vantato una notevole importanza all'interno della storia islamica, ossia quello dell' *Ijtihad*. Questo termine indica l'indipendente ragione speculativa alla luce del Corano e della Sunna in ambito prettamente giurisprudenziale. L'impegno speculativo ed intellettuale dell' *Ijtihad* è finalizzato alla formulazione di una risposta positiva alle sfide che le mutate condizioni socio-economiche e culturali hanno posto davanti ai musulmani. In questa lezione Iqbal discute la ragioni storiche che hanno condotto alla scomparsa dell'utilizzo della ragione speculativa in ambito giurisprudenziale, ribadendo nello stesso tempo le ragioni per cui questo concetto deve essere mantenuto vivo ed operativo in quanto parte integrante e fondamentale della natura dinamica dell'Islam.

Nella settima ed ultima lezione, Iqbal solleva una domanda fondamentale: È possibile la religione? Questo quesito lo induce a riflettere in merito alle diverse fasi della vita religiosa, che distingue rispettivamente in fede, pensiero e scoperta, ognuno dei quali si relaziona ad una sottomissione incondizionata, nella forma di un sistema razionale ed un'esperienza spirituale.

Da un punto di vista eminentemente storico, la tensione tra la moderna mente europea e la religione è dovuta al conflitto protratto tra Chiesa e Stato nel Medioevo e nei secoli successivi per il controllo dello spazio pubblico e delle coscienze. Una ragione ulteriore di questo conflitto è riconducibile al tentativo delle istituzioni ecclesiastiche di controllare il bisogno di libertà nell'ambito del discorso e della ricerca intellettuale reclamato da filosofi, scienziati ed in genere intellettuali occidentali. Inoltre, il cristianesimo in generale, a causa della visione dell'esistenza come distinta in due sfere contrapposte degli ambiti rispettivamente spirituale e temporali, ha lasciato la coscienza

umana in una condizione di conflitto perenne tra le necessità spirituali ed il bisogno di progresso materiale.

A quanto detto si deve inoltre aggiungere la preponderante presenza delle autorità ecclesiastiche nel modulare e formare la relazione dei singoli individui con il divino. Iqbal, in questa cornice di riferimento, presenta l'Islam e la sua visione del mondo come una religione dinamica capace di riempire lo spazio esistente tra la relazione dell'uomo con il divino sia nella sfera pubblica che in quella privata.

Iqbal descrive la prospettiva islamica sull'esistenza come un'unica sfera in cui l'elemento temporale e spirituale si trovano connessi ma in modo complementare e non come due dimensioni in perenne conflitto. La ragione e la rivelazione conducono l'essere umano a Dio e ad una vita equilibrata. Per questa ragione nella civiltà islamica la ragione (nella sua espressione scientifica) e la religione sono state interpretate raramente come due sistemi conflittuali. La rivelazione coranica pone infatti l'accento sulla natura e le sue innumerevoli manifestazioni intese ed interpretate come segni di Dio che debbono essere studiate e sulle quali ogni credente è chiamato a riflettere.

In assenza di una struttura ecclesiastica e clericale che presiede sui bisogni spirituali degli esseri umani, l'Islam offre loro, indipendentemente dal loro genere o dalla classe sociale di appartenenza, un accesso diretto alla dimensione religiosa e spirituale. L'Islam ha rimosso ogni forma di autorità posta tra uomo e Dio, oltre il Corano e la Sunna del Profeta, offrendo in questo modo delle immense possibilità per le interpretazioni personali nell'ampio ambito delle linee guida fornite dalle due fonti.

Nella prospettiva di Iqbal anche la preghiera, che un individuo offre a Dio, e la ricerca della verità da parte dello studioso e dello scienziato sono atti portatori di una dimensione divina in quanto sono finalizzati al miglioramento della condizione umana ed alla ricerca di un equi-

librio ed al raggiungimento di una relazione dinamica con la natura circostante.

Attraverso l'esame di queste ed altre tematiche esaminate nell'ambito del processo di ricostruzione del pensiero religioso nell'Islam, Iqbal sottolinea comunque che la condizione umana, nonostante le differenze esteriori tra gli esseri umani, è fondamentalmente la medesima. Per questa ragione, nella riflessione di questo grande pensatore l'Oriente e l'Occidente non sono considerate come due civiltà statiche in perenne conflitto ma piuttosto come due esperienze storiche che si sono influenzate a vicenda nel passato e continueranno a farlo anche nel futuro.

Il pensiero di Iqbal può essere compreso nella sua complessità solo se non viene presentato unicamente come il prodotto della civiltà islamica, in quanto questo pensatore, secondo la sua stessa ammissione, è stato ampiamente ispirato anche dalle radici filosofiche ed intellettuali dell'Occidente. Sarebbe stato impossibile per un pensatore del calibro di Iqbal emergere senza studiare e, nello stesso tempo, avvicinarsi all'Occidente in maniera critica con la sua profonda visione nelle fonti della conoscenza sia islamiche che occidentali. In altri termini, il pensiero di Muhammad Iqbal può essere interpretato come un ponte che mette in comunicazione l'Islam e l'Occidente secondo delle modalità originali che solo un lettore attento del suo pensiero potrà essere capace di cogliere.

Comunque, nonostante le possibili critiche che potrebbero essere mosse alla visione di Iqbal, l'ampio respiro della sua visione e la passione intellettuale mostrata nella sua riflessione su alcune delle questioni fondamentali connesse con il destino dell'umanità non possono essere sottovalutate. Le riflessioni di Iqbal ci aiutano ad assumere una prospettiva sia spirituale che temporale aperta al futuro eppure profondamente radicata negli insegnamenti dell'Islam nel complesso mondo, in cui viviamo.

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La strategia governativa nell'Islam come processo di riforma e rinnovamento

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Abstract

In quest'articolo sarà esaminata la natura della strategia governativa secondo gli insegnamenti coranici e l'esempio della Sunna del Profeta. L'analisi dell'esempio storico proposto dalla prima comunità islamica, letto in parallelo con il Corano, propone una nuova prospettiva relativa al processo della riforma e del rinnovamento necessari per il progresso della comunità islamica in epoca contemporanea.

Keywords: Stato civile, politica islamica, 'Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah', giurisprudenza islamica.

La legge divina ha stabilito che una comunità, che cerca di correggersi e di emendare i propri difetti, sarà preservata dalla distruzione: "Il tuo Signore non distruggerà mai delle città per un singolo errore, se i suoi abitanti sono disposti a correggersi".¹ Questo versetto sottolinea di fatto l'importanza che l'Islam ripone nell'attualizzazione di valori quali l'equità, la misericordia e la giustizia nel caso di individui, gruppi, comunità o nazioni. La difesa dell'equità in tutte le questioni di ordine pubblico viene enfatizzata infatti in molti versetti coranici. Generalmente,

¹Il Sacro Corano 11:117.

ogni strategia governativa che si fonda sui *'Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah'* appare finalizzata alla difesa dei deboli e degli oppressi, anche se costoro non appartengono alla medesima comunità o alla medesima fede. Sia i gruppi che gli individui debbono mostrarsi sempre disposti ad agire nella costante ricerca della giustizia, spesso senza considerare le conseguenze immediate.² Questo equilibrio viene conseguito attraverso una buona leadership, strategia governativa, saggezza, applicazione etica della conoscenza e, solo quando è necessario, difesa armata.³

La *Sharī'ah*, per sua natura, concerne il conseguimento della giustizia sociale che viene compresa ed interpretata come un'equa distribuzione delle opportunità, della ricchezza e dei privilegi all'interno di una società in accordo con i principi fondamentali della dignità umana. La presente riflessione ha inizio con una discussione relativa alla relazione tra il potere e la pietà nel Corano al fine di dimostrare in che modo la distinzione tra i due suggerisca che l'introduzione e l'applicazione dell'etica coranica costituisca una responsabilità collettiva e non presupponga una leadership politica islamica o uno Stato. La storia dell'introduzione dell'Islam nella penisola araba offre infatti un resoconto ricco e dettagliato delle fasi e della natura di un processo comprensivo di riforma sociale.⁴ La

²Il Sacro Corano 11:116: "Perché non vi erano, tra le generazioni che vi hanno preceduto, persone in possesso di buon senso, che proibivano agli uomini di spargere corruzione sulla terra, eccetto i pochi che abbiamo salvato dal pericolo? Però gli ingiusti hanno continuato a cercare il godimento di ciò che di buono della vita abbiamo loro concesso e si sono mantenuti nel peccato".

³Il Sacro Corano 2:251: "Così, secondo la volontà di Dio, li sconfissero. Davide uccise Golia e Dio gli diede potere e saggezza e gli insegnò qualunque cosa desiderasse. Se Dio non avesse concesso agli uomini di difendersi gli uni dagli altri, la terra sarebbe stata invasa dalla corruzione. Dio però diffonde le Sue benedizioni su tutti i popoli".

⁴Basma I. Abdelgafar, *Public Policy beyond Traditional Ju-*

preponderanza dell'autorità musulmana come risultato di questo processo non deve essere compresa come un fine in sé stesso e quindi, di conseguenza, come una spinta incondizionata verso la fondazione di uno Stato, ma piuttosto come una conseguenza dell'appello che l'Islam rivolge ai credenti per far fronte alle sfide sociali del proprio tempo. I primi destinatari di questo messaggio hanno compreso che la parte preponderante del *Dīn*, ossia la fede islamica, può essere considerata un'espressione dell'articolazione della *Sharī'ah*, all'interno di un determinato contesto temporale, al fine di conseguire l'equità, considerate le condizioni prevalenti.

Una tradizione del Profeta sembra confermare questa interpretazione: "In verità, Dio invia a questa comunità, ogni cento anni, qualcuno che rinnoverà il *Dīn*".⁵ Un secolo è un lasso di tempo in cui dei significativi mutamenti relativi alle circostanze sociali, politiche ed intellettuali rendono legittima una rilettura della parola rivelata secondo le mutate circostanze in ambito politico, sociale ed economico. Un "secolo" rappresenta un limite temporale al di là del quale le nostre prospettive etiche diventano obsolete, rendendo necessaria una lettura rinnovata che riflette lo stato delle nostre conoscenze nei termini degli ambiti tecnologici, politici, economici e sociali, che consentono una nuova comprensione del modo in cui la parola rivelata e non debbano combinarsi per migliorare le condizioni di vita. Il rinnovo del *Dīn* non può essere intrapreso in assenza di letture contemporanee della parola rivelata e non. In assenza di un tale processo, il *Dīn* diviene arcaico, irrilevante e persino pericoloso a causa della continua rinascita di letture storiche che di fatto contribuiscono alla persistenza di arretratezza e di contraddizioni all'interno di una determinata civiltà.

risprudence: a 'Maqāsid Approach (Herndon: IIIT: 2018).

⁵Sunan Abu Dawud (4291).

Questo articolo si compone di tre parti. Nella prima, si discute il fatto che nel testo Coranico il potere e la pietà sono combinate raramente per esprimere la varietà delle possibilità per una strategia governativa sia buona che cattiva ed il modo in cui ci si deve rapportare con entrambe. L'impegno civico emerge come una conseguenza chiave di tali realtà. Nella seconda parte, sarà esaminata la natura dell'orientamento all'azione secondo gli insegnamenti islamici. L'azione ed il conseguimento di determinati benefici costituiscono un ambito critico nella conservazione del *Dīn*. L'ultima sezione dimostra allora come l'azione sociale sia possibile anche in quella che sembra essere la circostanza più problematica offrendo, nello stesso tempo, degli insegnamenti relativi alla riforma sociale che appaiono piuttosto evidenti dall'inizio della storia islamica.

Una delle conclusioni più interessanti derivate lettura del Corano è la chiara separazione tra il potere politico e la pietà religiosa o, più generalmente, il comportamento etico. Questa separazione ha delle implicazioni importanti per la strategia governativa, l'ordine pubblico e l'impegno civico. Fondamentalmente, questo dimostra che gli agenti che promuovono il ruolo di guida della *Sharī'ah* possano essere collocati all'interno del sistema della stessa strategia governativa o della società civile. Il locus degli agenti definisce necessariamente gli approcci possibili insieme alla natura e all'entità della responsabilità. Questa separazione di potere e di pietà religiosa sottolinea anche l'importanza di stabilire delle istituzioni che servano a mitigare un comportamento privo di etica a prescindere dalle supposte affiliazioni religiose di un governo o della sua leadership.

Il potere nel Corano è definito prevalentemente e principalmente come l'abilità di compiere qualsiasi cosa in modo assoluto. Questo tipo di potere si colloca esclusi-

vamente all'interno del dominio divino in quanto la fonte ultima del potere è Dio; Egli è il Signore dei Mondi e del Giorno del Giudizio.⁶ Nelle parole di al-Ghazali: "Egli è il Signore degli esseri umani, degli animali, delle piante, degli angeli, dei pianeti, delle stelle, dei sistemi e tutto quello che esiste in questo mondo è subordinato a Dio, legato al Suo potere e totalmente dipendente dalla Sua grazia, benedizioni e compassione".⁷ Nell'ambito strettamente umano il potere è necessariamente dipendente dalla sua fonte divina. Il testo coranico rivela che il potere degli esseri umani è definito come l'abilità e la disposizione ad esercitare le capacità, i talenti, la conoscenza, le risorse e le doti naturali che, nell'insieme, conferiscono ad una persona o ad un gruppo un vantaggio sugli altri, rendendoli capaci di dominare e di regolare gli affari altrui in accordo con degli interessi specifici. Questo potere, sebbene sia garantito da Lui, non è necessariamente legato o rappresentativo di Dio. Infatti, l'associazione di qualsiasi individuo con la rappresentanza divina assume una particolarmente serietà nelle questioni di ordine pubblico in quanto nessuno ha il diritto di affermare di rappresentare il volere divino. Questo tipo di comportamento può essere solo sospettato dal momento che le politiche che promuovono l'interesse pubblico (*al-maslahah*), il rispetto per la dignità umana (*al-karāmah*) ed il miglioramento delle condizioni dell'esistenza (*al-ihyā'*) non dovrebbero richiedere né un ricorso all'autoritarismo né ai fenomeni soprannaturali.

Inoltre, ogni potere nell'ambito umano, per quanto grande possa essere, è caratterizzato da limiti ben delineati. Gli esseri umani non possono modificare le leggi della natura, prevedere il futuro o controllare i cicli macrosociali. Il Corano sfida il potere a far sorgere il sole da

⁶Il Sacro Corano 1:1-7

⁷Muhammed al-Ghazali, *A Thematic Commentary on the Qur'an* (Malta: IIIT, 2011), 3.

Occidente⁸, a creare qualcosa di simile ad un piccolo insetto⁹, a sedare i mari o i venti, o a controllare le nuvole e la pioggia. Il testo sacro spiega anche che i giorni di abbondanza e di difficoltà sono comuni per gli esseri umani¹⁰ e che l'ascesa e la decadenza delle nazioni appare evidente a coloro che osservano e viaggiano attraverso la terra.¹¹ Ogni nazione eventualmente soccombe alle cause della decadenza e, al pari di altri fenomeni organici, si disintegra e muore.

Il Corano ammonisce relativamente a quattro principali fallimenti etici o fenomeni di sistemi politici e società che conducono inevitabilmente all'autodistruzione. Questi fenomeni, che sono particolarmente resistenti agli interventi ufficiali includono: (1) Le strutture economiche che privilegiano pochi potenti inclusa la distribuzione iniqua del reddito e della ricchezza, gli ingiusti regolamenti di mercato, l'agevolazione di determinati beni, servizi o altre transazioni che sono immorali di per se stesse o che promuovono l'immoralità, e gli eccessi compiuti contro la natura e le altre creature viventi; (2) Le strutture sociali che privilegiano determinati gruppi o individui, sia che siano basate sul genere, il gruppo etnico di appartenenza, il credo o ogni altra divisione che di fatto pone uno o molteplici gruppi sotto la tirannia di altri; (3) I costumi sessuali che riflettono un'incuria intenzionale verso le regole delle discrezione e della privacy al fine di sfruttare specifici elementi della società o supportare dei profitti illeciti e (4) Le convinzioni religiose ed innovazioni che attribuiscono determinate concezioni ideologiche alla rivelazione divina. La graduale penetrazione all'interno della società di tali sbandamenti morali da parte degli esseri

⁸Il Sacro Corano 2:258.

⁹Il Sacro Corano 22:73.

¹⁰Il Sacro Corano 3:140.

¹¹Il Sacro Corano 3:137-139.

umani associata a queste scelte conduce ad uno svilimento della dignità umana e ad un accumulo delle ingiustizie nelle diverse manifestazioni. Detto questo, Dio concede il potere a chi Egli vuole, siano ricchi o poveri, religiosi o ribelli, credenti o miscredenti, benevolenti o repressivi etc. per il lasso di tempo che Egli desidera, sia breve che lungo.

Il Corano afferma: “O Dio! Signore del potere. Tu concedi il potere a chi vuoi e togli il potere da chi vuoi. Tu concedi onore a chi vuoi e umili chi vuoi. Nelle Tue mani vi è tutto il bene. In verità, Tu sei l’Onnipotente”.¹²

Sotto questo punto di vista, il Corano fa riferimento a molti esempi della combinazione possibile di potere e di pietà. Il Profeta Abramo viene descritto nell’atto di dialogare con un potente relativamente all’esistenza di Dio.¹³ Il potente, che non viene identificato né con il nome e nemmeno con il titolo, dimostra che la fede in Dio non costituisce una condizione per la concessione del potere. In un altro caso un profeta dei *Banu Israil* sceglie Talut come sovrano nonostante il loro dispiacere a causa della sua mancanza di ricchezza. Talut, comunque, è stato scelto e gli è stata concessa saggezza, conoscenza e prestanza fisica.¹⁴ La sua mancanza di ricchezza non rappresentava infatti uno svantaggio nello schema del pianto divino. Questo non significa che il potere non venga coadiuvato dalla ricchezza o che la ricchezza costituisca un fattore privo d’importanza, ma piuttosto sottolinea il fatto che la ricchezza non costituisce una preconditione del potere o della leadership quando sono presenti altre qualità.

Questa narrazione coranica si pone in uno stridente contrasto rispetto allo spettacolare esempio del Faraone e di Mosè. Il Faraone, identificato con il suo titolo re-

¹²Il Sacro Corano 3:26.

¹³Il Sacro Corano 2:258.

¹⁴Il Sacro Corano 2:258.

gale, era il detentore di un estremo potere che vantava delle espressioni politiche, economiche e sociali. Eppure costui ha trasgredito i limiti posti agli esseri umani, dividendo i propri sudditi al fine di ridurre un gruppo in una condizione di schiavitù. Il Faraone ha schiavizzato i Figli d'Israele, uccidendo i loro figli ed inducendo alla dissolutezza le loro donne e ragazze. Al profeta Mosè ed a suo fratello Aronne venne affidato il compito di recare al Faraone il messaggio della fede al fine che potesse riformare il suo comportamento e cessare la persecuzione contro gli Israeliti.¹⁵

È importante riconoscere che i non credenti non sono rappresentati esclusivamente come degli oppressivi tiranni o come dei leader ingiusti o incapaci. La storia del profeta Joseph introduce infatti la figura di un monarca potente e benevolente ma non credente. La narrazione coranica rivela in che modo il re era preoccupato del benessere del proprio popolo attraverso l'impegno per garantire loro la sicurezza degli approvvigionamenti alimentari. Quando costui riconobbe che il profeta Joseph era l'ufficiale più capace sotto questo punto di vista, gli affidò una delle più alte cariche di governo: "Stai sicuro. Tu sei davanti alla mia presenza con un rango fermamente stabilito e con una fedeltà completamente provata".¹⁶ In questo modo, al profeta venne garantita l'autorità su tutti i magazzini dell'Egitto al fine che potesse con successo amministrarli nel periodo della carestia.¹⁷ La leadership politica in questa narrazione combina il potere con la benevolenza e la mancanza di una determinata fede religiosa di stampo monoteista. Come risultato, il profeta Joseph si sarebbe potuto impegnare in questo governo e servire una popolazione che era composta da non-credenti.

¹⁵Il Sacro Corano 20:50-73.

¹⁶Il Sacro Corano 12:54.

¹⁷Il Sacro Corano 12:54-57.

Nella storia del re Salomone, la cui potere si estendeva inoltre al di là dell'ambito umano per includere l'autorità rispetto a tutte le altre creature,¹⁸ viene presentata invece una combinazione di potere e di fede. Il testo coranico illustra in che modo il profeta Salomone, che era uno dei monarchi più potenti che siano mai vissuti sulla terra, abbia iniziato uno scambio diplomatico con un'altra regina, che era sia potente che benevolente, ma inizialmente non era una credente. Anche in questo contesto il Corano non identifica la regina di Saba con il nome, conferendo in questo modo alla leadership femminile una qualità generica. Il Corano è chiaro nel ritenere che il potere non viene garantito solo agli uomini, né in senso terreno né in senso spirituale. La storia raccontata nel testo sacro dimostra chiaramente che la regina di Saba governava su di un vasto regno con prosperità, dignità e con una forma piuttosto interessante di governo consultivo.

I passi coranici appena discussi dimostrano che il potere politico e la pietà religiosa non sono necessariamente correlati nei modi in cui alcune persone dal forte sentimento etico potrebbero pensare. Sebbene sia costitutivo della legge divina, il potere nelle mani dei tiranni ha condotto ad una sofferenza considerevole nella storia. Il ricorso a Dio ed alla guida che ha rivelato nella *Shari'ah* è inteso per incoraggiare e dare alle persone la possibilità di agire per il bene e la giustizia e per rispondere all'ingiustizia ogni volta che viene praticata all'interno della loro società. La nostra comprensione della conservazione del *Dīn* ha quindi un'importanza fondamentale per far fronte a questo dovere.

La conservazione del *Dīn* è il più importante dei fini dei '*Maqāsid*'. Tutte le altre finalità della '*Shari'ah*', come sono state definite dagli autori classici,¹⁹ in ogni momento

¹⁸Il Sacro Corano 34:12-17;27:18-22.

¹⁹Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, *Treatise on 'Maqāsid al-*

storico sono necessariamente finalizzate a questo obiettivo supremo. In altri termini, l'articolazione della conservazione della vita, della progenie, dell'intelletto, della dignità e della ricchezza sono tutti esposti e regolati secondo la concezione prevalente del *Dīn*. Alla luce di tutto ciò, la religione islamica può essere considerata dotata di due aspetti principali che, a loro volta, sono legati a quello che Draz chiama l'intensivo o l'estensivo o l'interno e l'esterno,²⁰ che sembrano coincidere con la distinzione suggerita nella letteratura relativa ai '*Maqāsid* tra le '*ibādāt* o gli atti di devozione e i '*mu'āmalāt* o questioni di natura pratica. Sebbene la componente intensiva costituisca unicamente una dimensione relativamente limitata dell'Islam nei termini della manifestazione visibile, molti studiosi hanno insistito scorrettamente che questo aspetto è sufficiente nell'ambito strettamente religioso. Infatti, solo nella componente estensiva, ossia nell'ambito delle questioni legate alla quotidianità la sincerità dell'elemento intensivo può essere rivelato. Secondo l'insegnamento coranico, infatti, colui che ha compiuto un atomo di bene, vedrà le implicazioni e le conseguenze delle sue azioni nel Giorno del Giudizio, e lo stesso accadrà a colui che invece ha compiuto anche un atomo di male.²¹ Il Profeta Muhammad ci ha ammonito che nel Giorno del Giudizio le persone dovranno rendere conto del modo in cui hanno trascorso le loro vite, per quale motivazione hanno agito, da quale fonte hanno messo insieme le loro fortune, come hanno impiegato le loro risorse ed hanno fatto uso dei loro corpi.

La conservazione della religione quindi implica due ambiti di azione. Il primo è relativo alla salvaguardia dei principali atti di culto e quello su cui dipendono contro la

Sharī'ah', trans. Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi (Herndon: IIIT, 2006), 285.

²⁰Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *The Moral World of the Qur'an* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 285.

²¹Il Sacro Corano 99:7-8.

corruzione e le innovazioni. La testimonianza di fede, la preghiera, il digiuno, il pagamento della *Zakat* ed il pellegrinaggio rimarranno più o meno invariati in ogni tempo. Il secondo, invece, consiste nell'attualizzazione dei doveri articolati nel Corano attraverso l'internalizzazione e la sintesi di regole appropriate secondo le condizioni prevalenti in modo tale che le nostre azioni siano definite dai valori basilari dell'Islam inclusa la misericordia, l'equità, la giustizia, la saggezza ed il welfare.

Al livello dell'organizzazione e della gestione dello Stato il Corano include le proibizioni relative alla rottura dei trattati,²² al dislocamento forzato degli abitanti di una determinata regione geografica²³ ed agli atti di aggressione. Tutti questi doveri posseggono una dimensione integrale relativa alla conservazione del *Dīn* e possono costituire la fondazione di un ordine pubblico etico e profondamente umano. Il Corano afferma: "Non hai visto colui che nega la venuta del Giorno del Giudizio? Costui scaccia l'orfano con asprezza, e non incoraggia a nutrire il povero. Guai a coloro che pregano, ma non prestano alcuna attenzione alle loro preghiere, coloro che vogliono solo essere visti, e negano ogni assistenza agli altri uomini".²⁴

La conservazione della religione è inestricabilmente legata al modo in cui agiamo nel mondo. La prova della fede infatti si trova nell'azione.²⁵ La preservazione della religione di Dio consiste nello stabilire, proteggere e difendere i principi dell'Islam in modo appropriato ed all'interno dei diversi contesti. Il successo nella vita di questo mondo dipende infatti dalla consistente applicazione degli imperativi morali dell'Islam sia nei periodi di difficoltà che in quelli prosperi. Questa aspettazione divina spinge il cre-

²²Il Sacro Corano 9:4.

²³Il Sacro Corano 22:40.

²⁴Il Sacro Corano 107:1-7.

²⁵Il Sacro Corano 29:2-3.

dente verso un impegno costante per conseguire un'armonia tra le forze che esercitano un impatto sulla vita quotidiana. Una oscillazione continua tra gli imperativi della parola rivelata e le condizioni contingenti del mondo, così come ne facciamo quotidianamente esperienza, caratterizza la condizione del musulmano praticante.

La guida necessaria per supportare quest'impegno si fonda sul comando del *Tajdīd* o il rinnovo del *Dīn* cui fa riferimento il Profeta Muhammad nella tradizione precedentemente menzionata. Ogni distinta epoca storica manifesta un bisogno continuo di tradurre la dimensione intensiva ed estensiva dell'Islam in un'azione sociale rilevante e tangibile. Nel nostro mondo contemporaneo, quest'operazione richiede un nuovo approccio giurisprudenziale, ossia un *fiqh wāqī'ī*, che tenga nella debita considerazione le esigenze degli uomini e delle donne del nostro tempo. La conoscenza della parola rivelata e del suo significato storico può essere invece considerato una comprensione teoretica o un *fiqh nazari*, che rappresenta invece la maggior parte di quanto è oggi trasmesso dai giuristi e dagli studiosi.

La storia della prima comunità islamica rappresenta un esempio probante del modo in cui la nascente comunità musulmana ha conseguito quest'impresa e, come risultato, è stata capace di mutare il sistema politico che aveva privato dei diritti ed oppresso determinati individui e gruppi oltre a molte altre ingiustizie basate sui costumi tribali. La sezione seguente sottolinea alcuni degli eterni insegnamenti che concernono la riforma sociale ed il rinnovamento politico che posseggono una grande rilevanza anche in epoca contemporanea.

La premessa dell'eguaglianza umana è così importante da costituire l'argomento principale del discorso di addio del Profeta Muhammad. Nel giorno più sacro, del mese più sacro e nella sacra città della Mecca, egli ha ribadito i

più importanti insegnamenti della sua missione sottolineando che tutto quello che ha trasmesso nel suo discorso di addio era sacro quanto il tempo ed il luogo in cui veniva pronunciato. Egli ha enfatizzato la santità della vita, della proprietà, del giusto commercio e della moralità pubblica. Ha inoltre sottolineato l'importanza della collaborazione e del rispetto reciproco tra gli uomini e le donne.

Il Profeta ha chiarito che da quel momento in poi solo la fede accompagnata dalle buone azioni avrebbe potuto costituire il carattere distintivo di ogni singolo essere umano. La lotta per l'uguaglianza degli esseri umani, al tempo della sua missione, ha ridotto l'oppressione ai livelli minimi: la schiavitù stava per essere abolita, l'aggressione era stata contenuta ed i diritti dei deboli e dei marginalizzati erano stati ampiamente salvaguardati. Questi fondamenti, comunque, fanno solo parte di una guida complessa ed eterna che costituisce il compimento del *Dīn*.²⁶

Il contesto contemporaneo fornisce delle modalità più sofisticate e complesse per comprendere i principi della parola rivelata e non. Non vi è infatti un settore politico relativamente al quale non possa essere trovata qualche forma di guida nel Corano. Per fare un esempio sostanziale, consideriamo il cibo e l'agricoltura. In termini semplici, il Corano ripetutamente esorta i credenti a cibarsi di quanto è "lecito" e "puro".²⁷ L'associazione del cibo con la spiritualità è evidente ogni volta in cui la prima viene menzionata. Il cibo ed in termini più ampi l'agricoltura è associata all'aumento della popolazione ed al sorgere delle civiltà.²⁸ Il ruolo dell'agricoltura e la qualità del nutrimento umano è fondamentale per la costruzione di comunità stabili, forti e sane. Di conseguenza, gli insegnamenti del Corano relativi al cibo ed all'agricoltura posseggono delle profonde

²⁶Il Sacro Corano 5:3.

²⁷Il Sacro Corano 5:3.

²⁸Il Sacro Corano 2:168, 172; 16:14.

implicazioni per la conservazione della vita. A differenza delle interpretazioni popolari che limitano le regole relative alla proibizione del cibo alla carne, ai suoi derivati ed all'alcohol, il Corano contiene molteplici informazioni relative a quanto costituisce un cibo sano e puro. Le questioni legate alla nutrizione, alla sicurezza alimentare e alla distribuzione sono chiaramente definite nel Corano come responsabilità della società civile e dello Stato.²⁹

Quest'insegnamento richiama un episodio appartenente alla storia della prima comunità islamica quando Medina, durante il califfato di 'Umar al-Khattab, ha fatto esperienza di una terribile carestia. Una cornice amministrativa unitaria venne messa in atto per armonizzare le politiche governative per far fronte alla crisi alimentare. Il razionamento venne accompagnato alla richiesta di aiuto dalle regioni vicine, la distribuzione non favorì nessun individuo o gruppo rispetto agli altri, ed alcune disposizioni legali, valide in tempi normali, vennero sospese per rispondere a quell'eccezionale situazione che comportava per la popolazione forme di grande sofferenza e difficoltà.

L'accettazione degli insegnamenti del Corano relativamente alla produzione ed al consumo di quanto è sia lecito che sano può mutare il volto della moderna industria alimentare inclusa l'agricoltura, la produzione, la distribuzione e la commercializzazione. Piuttosto di accettare lo status quo, una lettura della parola rivelata in relazione al mondo contemporaneo dovrebbe incoraggiarci a pensare ed a riflettere in merito a delle alternative di sviluppo sostenibile che non siano finalizzate solo ed esclusivamente alla conservazione della salute ma al miglioramento del rapporto tra uomo e natura da una parte e gli animali dall'altra, che soffrono per le conseguenze delle abitudini immorali degli esseri umani relative al consumo alimentare.

²⁹Il Sacro Corano 30:9.

Per quel che riguarda poi il bestiame, il concetto di *halāl* deve essere compreso in modo più adeguato ed onnicomprensivo. Un'azienda che intende commercializzare dei prodotti di derivazione animale considerabili come *halāl* dovrebbe proteggere i diritti degli animali, rispettare la loro natura, limitare la macellazione a quanto è strettamente necessario, provvedere del mangime naturale e buone condizioni di alloggio, mostrare misericordia ed impedire ogni tipo di sperpero. Le industrie contemporanee legate agli allevamenti intensivi, incluse molte aziende definite *halāl*, non rispettano l'essenza dell'Islam violando la santità della vita animale.

La lealtà politica nell'Islam si basa sull'accettazione di principi e non sulla lealtà verso specifici personaggi. Al di là dei messaggeri scelti da Dio, la leadership viene riconosciuta fino a quando protegge e promuove i principi della misericordia, dell'equità, della saggezza e del welfare armonizzando le regole della *Shari'ah* con i contesti prevalenti in modo che questi principi divengano l'esperienza vissuta di tutti coloro che sono legati all'interno di una specifica struttura politica. Quando sia Umar che Abu Bakr hanno assunto la leadership della comunità islamica, hanno fondato la loro autorità, che reclamava il sostegno dei diversi membri della comunità, sulla protezione dei principi islamici. Nel suo discorso d'insediamento, Abu Bakr ha affermato: "Se mi comporto bene, prestatemi aiuto, ma in caso contrario, correggetemi. La lealtà implica la sincera considerazione per la verità, la mancanza di considerazione verso di essa invece equivale al tradimento".³⁰ Umar successivamente ha riproposto questa disposizione in occasione del discorso inaugurale del suo califfato, quando ha affermato: "Cercherò la guida del Libro Sacro, e seguirò l'esempio del Profeta e di Abu Bakr. In quest'ambito, quindi, domando la vostra assistenza. Se

³⁰ Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah 6:305-306.

seguo il retto cammino, seguitemi. In caso contrario, invece, correggetemi al fine di non essere indotti a deviare da esso”.

La leadership deve essere meritoria, forte e dedicata ma non autoritaria. Sebbene sia fondata su di un principio, la riforma ed il rinnovamento hanno bisogno di una guida ed il modello della perfetta leadership nell'Islam è quello del Profeta Muhammad. Il Corano afferma che egli era letteralmente stato posto sulla retta via in merito alle questioni più disparate.³¹ Nonostante ciò, non gli venne concesso di mostrarsi autoritario ³² o nemmeno di avere degli atteggiamenti rigidi o eccessivamente severi.³³ Il carattere morale del Profeta Muhammad quindi ha mostrato una costante affidabilità, onestà, intelligenza, pazienza, risolutezza e perspicacia. Egli ha poi riposto una grande importanza sulla consultazione e sul lavoro di squadra. Negli anni precedenti alla rivelazione, il Profeta si è astenuto da molte delle pratiche sociali che avrebbero potuto condurre ad una forma di debolezza nel suo carattere. Fino ai giorni nostri, la combinazione del suo carattere con l'appello al messaggio dell'Islam attrae i credenti e mostra loro la via da seguire, rendendo nello stesso tempo estremamente difficile per i suoi detrattori screditarlo.

La forma di leadership del Profeta Muhammad ha promosso l'ascesa di altri leader e personalità, in modo simile ai messaggeri che lo hanno preceduto. Il Corano e la Sunna sono pieni di tali esempi. Nessun individuo, sia uomo che donna, può recare qualcosa di significativo per l'umanità senza il supporto e la cooperazione degli altri. Anche le persone più potenti, sotto determinati aspetti, sono dipendenti dagli altri.

³¹Il Sacro Corano 45:18.

³²Il Sacro Corano 88:22.

³³Il Sacro Corano 3:159.

Le iniziative finalizzate alla riforma richiedono il supporto di tutte le parti sociali. In ogni tempo, i seguaci dei profeti hanno mostrato la tendenza a costituire la forza di cambiamento in ambito sociale. Il Profeta Muhammad, sotto questo rispetto, non può essere considerato un'eccezione. Il messaggio che ha portato era finalizzato a ristabilire la dignità di ogni essere umano, una dignità che è stata stabilita da Dio stesso. Questa dignità coinvolgeva in maniera particolare le donne, gli schiavi, i deboli, i poveri e gli emarginati della società. Abu Bakr, che successivamente è divenuto il primo califfo, era infatti solito spendere delle ingenti somme di denaro per liberare sia gli uomini che le donne dalla schiavitù.

La storia islamica ci insegna che il punto di svolta per la comunità islamica nascente è avvenuto quando un piccolo gruppo di uomini provenienti da Medina si convertì durante la stagione del pellegrinaggio. Questo gruppo riteneva che l'Islam avesse il potenziale di porre fine alle aspre divisioni che stavano devastando i diversi clan residenti in Yathrib. Il loro impegno nella trasmissione del messaggio condusse al conversione di settanta medinensi, di cui facevano parte anche delle donne, che si recarono insieme alla Mecca per porgere la propria alleanza al Profeta. La conversione ed il supporto degli abitanti di Medina diede ai perseguitati nella Mecca un luogo sicuro in cui trasferirsi ed un'ambiente conforme per la trasformazione della società. Secondo al-Ghazali, in Medina "... furono create le prime famiglie musulmane, i primi mercati, posti governativi, centri di studio, imprese economiche, fattorie e consigli legislativi, che si ponevano tutti sotto la guida della Rivelazione Divina e della leadership illuminata di Muhammad".³⁴

Al di là dei cittadini ordinari, comunque, l'impatto

³⁴Muhammed al-Ghazali, *A Thematic Commentary on the Qur'an* (Malta: IIIT, 2011), 28.

della diffusione e della profonda riforma delle strutture sia economiche che sociali, insieme all'equilibrio del potere in ambito geopolitico, richiede il supporto di determinati attori provenienti dall'élite della società. I leader della comunità, gli uomini d'affari, i politici e membri dell'esercito sono chiamati a sopportare un progetto di riforma attraverso degli elementi di creatività, risorse, protezione e salvaguardia del progetto stesso. Dall'inizio stesso della sua missione, il Profeta Muhammad ricevette il supporto di suo zio Abu Tālib, anche se costui non abbracciò mai l'Islam. Molte personalità, che non abbracciarono l'Islam all'inizio dell'apostolato del Profeta o successivamente, prestarono aiuto e soccorso ai primi musulmani. Quest'esempio c'insegna che la cooperazione può essere fondata su diverse motivazioni fino a quando i contributi di diversi attori sono chiari e gli obiettivi della riforma sono rispettati. L'appello del Profeta al Negus, il monarca cristiano dell'Etiopia, al fine che concedesse asilo e protezione a quei musulmani che non avevano alcun mezzo per proteggersi dalla persecuzione, ne costituisce un esempio lampante.

La persistenza della persecuzione comunque ha destato le simpatie verso l'Islam ed i musulmani tra diversi membri dell'élite della Mecca. La conversione di Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib, un altro zio del Profeta, dopo che quest'ultimo era stato pesantemente da Abu Jahl, ha inferto un duro colpo all'opposizione. Successivamente i Quraysh dovettero affrontare un'altra ingente perdita in seguito alla conversione di Umar ibn al-Khattab. Umar, che divenne il secondo califfo dell'Islam, aveva un carattere magnanimo famoso per il suo coraggio e risolutezza. Seguirono poi le conversioni rispettivamente di Khālīd al-Wālīd e di 'Amrū ibn al-Ās, che nel primo periodo della predicazione del Profeta si erano opposti all'Islam con grande fermezza. La loro conversione dimostra come un messaggio veritiero combinato con una eccezionale leadership ed una grande

pazienza possa attrarre persino gli alleati più improbabili.

La forza, il prestigio, la nobiltà e la ricchezza non debbono, comunque, impedire al leader ed al riformatore politico di curare anche gli interessi dei più deboli, riservando loro un'attenzione particolare. Sotto questo punto di vista, il Corano menziona specificatamente una persona affetta da una menomazione fisica. All'inizio della Sura Abasa, il Corano riporta un episodio in cui un povero cieco si avvicinò al Profeta per ricevere degli insegnamenti mentre quest'ultimo era impegnato in una discussione con un leader dei Quraysh. Il Profeta mostrò l'intenzione di continuare a discutere con il nobile Quraysh, ignorando l'uomo cieco. In conseguenza di questo comportamento, ricevette la rivelazione in cui veniva rimproverato per la sua reazione. La rivelazione ammonisce i credenti a non emarginare le persone a causa di circostanze apparenti o immediate, ma afferma che non abbiamo alcun mezzo per sapere chi sarà il vero e sincero servitore della sua comunità. Come è accaduto, l'uomo cieco divenne governatore di Medina a dimostrazione del fatto che ogni membro della comunità è dotato di potenzialità e valore.

Dal punto di vista economico, molte misure comportano delle implicazioni maggiori rispetto ad altre. L'impatto di una riforma sui privilegi economici ha infatti un ruolo chiave in relazione al suo rifiuto o accettazione. La profonda riforma spesso implica un cambio di attitudine, nuove disposizioni e regole. Il rifiuto dell'Islam da parte dei pagani dell'Arabia era dovuto in parte al timore di una perdita di natura economica. Oltre alle alleanze tribali che consentivano ad un gruppo relativamente poco numeroso d'individui di dominare la ricchezza, la presenza di diversi idoli nella città della Mecca garantiva un sostanziale afflusso di pellegrini, cui erano associati anche degli ingenti benefici di natura economica. Il messaggio di eguaglianza e di unità portato dall'Islam ha consentito che si verifi-

casce anche un sostanziale cambiamento nell'ambito della sfera economica.

In aggiunta al mutamento delle attitudini ed alle disposizioni materiali di una società, il consolidamento di una riforma comporta anche il mutamento delle regole. Il contributo della rivelazione coranica, sotto questo punto di vista, è profondo. Le regole economiche ed etiche proposte dal testo sacro, che costituiscono un sistema completo, possono esercitare un influsso considerevole sul modo in cui la ricchezza e le risorse vengono amministrate, e conseguentemente sull'impatto che hanno sull'ambiente. La proibizione dell'usura³⁵, accompagnata all'incoraggiamento del legittimo commercio, può mutare il corso stesso della storia economica delle nazioni. Il sistema finanziario globale è così immerso nelle transazioni fondate sull'interesse che si è ormai raggiunto da tempo un'impasse non solo storico ma anche intellettuale. Solo pochi economisti possono mostrarsi capaci di meditare su e prendere in considerazione altre possibilità. Nello stesso ambito della finanza islamica, molti studiosi hanno formulato delle teorie che consentono delle transazioni fondate sul prestito ad interesse mostrando una comprensione piuttosto limitata dell'economica e della finanza contemporanea. Il testo coranico è chiaro nel proibire qualsiasi tipologia di usura indipendentemente dal tasso d'interesse applicato.³⁶

Relativamente all'importanza attribuita alla pace ed al rispetto del pluralismo, il Corano, la Sunna e le pratiche governative dei primi compagni hanno posto un'enfasi speciale sulla creazione ed il rispetto dei trattati e dei patti sociali. Una riforma non può essere effettiva se esclude alcuni settori o componenti della società. L'ampio consenso sociale include la sicurezza, l'inclusione sociale e la fornir-

³⁵Il Sacro Corano 2:275; 3:130; 4:161; 30:39.

³⁶Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *al-Riba fī Nazar al-Qānūn al-Islāmī* (Al-'Asr al-Hadīth lī al-Nashr, 1987).

tura di beni e servizi per tutti i componenti della società. Nella sua essenza, l'Islam costituisce un patto tra Dio e gli esseri umani, secondo cui quest'ultimi non recideranno i legami che Dio ha comandato di mantenere uniti o corromperanno la terra.³⁷ Tutti i patti tra i credenti e gli appartenenti ad altre fedi e comunità sono governati da quello ancestrale tra loro e Dio.³⁸ I patti debbono essere infatti rispettati nell'interesse del mantenimento della pace e non possono essere infranti se non per una giusta causa.³⁹ Inoltre, la ritorsione per aver infranto i patti non è consentita a meno che non si accompagni a dei palesi atti di ostilità da parte del nemico. L'inizio della storia islamica propone un esempio relativo a molteplici negoziazioni di pace e patti di non belligeranza in conformità con il comando di Dio relativo all'assegnazione della priorità alla pace: "Però, se il nemico inclina verso la pace, fatelo anche voi e riponete la vostra fiducia in Dio perché Egli ode e conosce tutte le cose".⁴⁰

L'esempio di Medina è ancora una volta estremamente distruttivo sotto questo punto di vista. In seguito all'arrivo dei convertiti dalla Mecca, il territorio di Yathrib era composto da quattro distinti gruppi: gli emigrati dalla Mecca, gli Ansari originari di Medina, i pagani e le tribù ebraiche. Gli Ansari avevano una loro specifica cultura e pratiche sociali stabilite da tempo immemorabile. Gli emigrati dalla Mecca avevano invece bisogno di un alloggio, di una fonte di reddito e di altre necessità. I pagani erano divisi in due gruppi distinti: coloro che aderivano alle pratiche pagane e non si curavano delle scelte religiose altrui e coloro che, pur avendo mostrato amicizia verso i nuovi arrivati, tuttavia nutrivano un forte risentimento verso di

³⁷Il Sacro Corano 2:27.

³⁸Il Sacro Corano 16:91.

³⁹Il Sacro Corano 16:61.

⁴⁰Il Sacro Corano 8:61.

loro e l'Islam in generale. Vi erano poi le tribù ebraiche di Medina che si erano stabilite in quel territorio prima degli stessi Ansari e avevano mantenuto un'esistenza ed identità separata rispetto alle tribù arabe. Godevano di un certo benessere economico grazie all'agricoltura ed al controllo del commercio. Sebbene l'Islam portò dei mutamenti che avrebbero potuto esercitare un impatto importante sui costumi di tutti questi gruppi, tuttavia comandava nello stesso tempo il rispetto per le loro legittime differenze. Al Profeta quindi venne assegnato un modo per integrare tutti i membri di questa nuova comunità.

Attraverso la Costituzione di Medina vennero tracciate le relazioni tra tutti i gruppi che vivevano nel territorio di Yathrib. L'obiettivo del documento era quello di definire una comunità che aveva un fine comune ed una strategia di difesa indipendentemente dalle differenze esistenti tra i suoi membri. Questo documento, che può essere considerato una sorta di patto sociale, era stato studiato per regolare i rapporti tra le diverse comunità e per mantenere la sicurezza all'interno ed all'esterno di Medina. Secondo questo documento, ad ogni comunità veniva concesso di mantenere le proprie distinte pratiche socio-culturali e di onorare i reciproci patti. Il documento garantiva anche la salvaguardia dei diritti dei membri economicamente e socialmente più deboli della comunità. Alle tribù ebraiche veniva concessa pace, sicurezza ed equità, ed erano considerate una sola nazione o comunità, sebbene venisse loro garantito il pieno diritto di praticare la propria fede.

Oltre alla difesa collettiva, tutti i membri della comunità erano chiamati a prendere parte ad un processo consultivo finalizzato al benessere di tutti gli abitanti di Medina. Ogni tipo di disputa sarebbe successivamente stata rimandata a Dio ed al Profeta, a cui nel Corano era stato comandato di consentire sia ai cristiani che agli ebrei libertà giuridica. La costituzione di Medina quindi aveva

come scopo quello di plasmare una comunità attraverso i principi di misericordia, giustizia ed uguaglianza.

La difesa armata era considerata l'ultima scelta. Però, mentre i musulmani tentavano di strutturare la nuova comunità secondo i principi coranici, la violenza dei Quraysh era continua ed inarrestabile. Ciononostante, il permesso di rispondere alla violenza con la difesa armata venne concesso ai musulmani solo dopo che erano stati raggiunti dei traguardi importanti, inclusa la creazione di un'entità politica legittima, l'esistenza di un messaggio profondo e della sua penetrazione nei cuori e nelle menti, una prolungata pazienza carica di sacrifici incluso un embargo di tre anni, l'adesione alla causa di importanti individui dotati di una grande leadership e di altre capacità, la fortificazione della comunità in Medina dai punti di vista materiali, sociali e spirituali e la formazione di una serie di alleanze con le tribù circostanti.

La rivelazione coranica concede ai credenti di combattere solo nel caso si verifichino determinate condizioni. Secondo il punto di vista di al-Ghazali: "La pace è sempre preferibile quando i diritti sono protetti e quando la fede viene rispettata; se la pace però implica una abietta sottomissione, non può essere difesa semplicemente né realisticamente né moralmente". I credenti, che sono organizzati all'interno di entità politiche legittime e riconosciute sono chiamati ad impegnarsi al massimo delle proprie capacità per ricondurre alla pace le parti belligeranti, fino a combattere l'aggressore al fine di far cessare le ostilità. La pace viene conseguita con la resa del nemico, in quanto anche nel conflitto i musulmani sono chiamati a controllarsi e ad assumere un comportamento basato sulla giustizia e non sulla vendetta.⁴¹

I musulmani non possono combattere in maniera indiscriminata secondo l'insegnamento del seguente versetto

⁴¹Il Sacro Corano 49:9.

coranico: “O credenti, quando vi recate fuori dal vostro paese per la causa di Dio, domandate con attenzione e non dite a qualcuno che vi offre il saluto: ’Tu non sei un credente!’, desiderando i beni transeunti di questa vita. Presso Dio vi sono profitti e spoglie abbondanti. Anche voi eravate come loro fino a quando Egli non vi ha concesso il Suo favore. Domandate con attenzione perché Dio è ben consapevole delle vostre azioni”. Questo versetto promuove un’etica di guerra che è stata da lungo tempo violata in ragione delle moderne tecniche belliche. Ai combattenti non è concesso infatti di uccidere delle persone innocenti e coloro che avanzano un’offerta di pace.

Conclusioni

La strategia governativa nell'Islam è finalizzata principalmente alla riforma ed al rinnovamento. La separazione tra potere politico e pietà religiosa nel piano divino è intesa per incoraggiare l'emergere di individui e di gruppi, che sono pronti a difendere ed a promuovere quanto è di beneficio alla società nel suo insieme, cercando di allontanarne le pratiche giudicate nocive per la sua stabilità ed il suo benessere. L'insegnamento islamico promuove anche la consapevolezza della necessità di creare delle istituzioni che possano mitigare questa realtà. L'Islam è infatti una religione di fede e di azione. Il passaggio del tempo e delle epoche richiede l'opera di individui eccezionali e gruppi dotati della conoscenza e la capacità di agire per rispondere alle sfide d'interpretare la parola rivelata in relazione alle condizioni contemporanee.

Ogni iniziativa di riforma deve fondarsi su di un messaggio chiaro, logico ed utile. Questo sottolinea il principio e l'orientamento degli obiettivi della riforma islamica. In aggiunta alle rispettive verità fondamentali, ci si aspetta che la riforma risolva le sfide contemporanee attraverso

l'integrazione di elementi appropriati dalla parola rivelata e non. La conoscenza e la capacità di intraprendere questa sfida richiedono un certo tipo di leadership che sia meritoria e forte ma scevra di elementi di autoritarismo politico.

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Süleyman Uludağ, *İbn Taymiyye: Ezber Bozan Bir İlim ve Fikir Adamı*, Ankara: Harf Yayınları, 2019, 199 pp.

Emrah Kaya

The ideas of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), one of the most prominent and contested thinkers of medieval Islamic thought, need to be examined and re-discussed over time due to their complexity and originality. In our time especially, many researchers from various countries undertook the study of his life and works and it is a very valuable and precious effort, indeed.

Among the results of the growing contemporary scholarly interests in Ibn Taymiyya are the two books, one written in Turkish and authored by Süleyman Uludağ, while the other one -written in English- is authored by Jon Hoover¹. Notwithstanding the different intellectual and scholarly background of the two writers, both of them focus on the most remarkable and, at the same time, high disputed ideas and conceptions of Ibn Taymiyya. In order to remain within the scope of this review, one of them, the book authored by the Turkish scholar Süleyman Uludağ, in Turkish, will be examined here. In spite of the different scholarly and cultural backgrounds, it is noteworthy that both writers have made significant scholarly efforts to understand and interpret the diverse and contested thoughts and teachings of Ibn Taymiyya.

¹Jon Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya* (London: Oneworld Academic, 2019).

Süleyman Uludağ is a well-known professor in Turkish academia through his books, articles, and translations. Among his prominent translation works are *Risāla* of ‘Abd al-Karīm Qushayrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* of Hucwīrī, *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldūn and *Fasl al-Maqāl* of Ibn Rushd. In addition to these translations, he also authored many works on Islamic thought and Muslim thinkers, as well.

*İbn Teymiyye: Ezber Bozan Bir İlim ve Fikir Adamı*² is a well-researched biographical and a well-focused analysis of his ideas and thoughts. The book consists of three main sections entitled “İbn Taymiyya”; “Anti-Tasawwuf Trends and the Philosophy of Tasawwuf of Ibn Taymiyya” and “The Problem of Logic in Ibn Taymiyya”.

The book starts with a discussion on Ibn Taymiyya as a significant critic and thinker due to the remarkable features of his thought such as the centrality given to original sources of Islam, the defense of *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning) rather than *Taqlid* (imitation), and the attempt to revive the religious sciences, preferring them over the rational and natural sources of knowledge in religious matters.

Uludağ highlights both the effort and the commitment of Ibn Taymiyya to dispel the damaging effects of political chaos that Muslim societies were experiencing after the tragic Mongol invasion and the end of the Abbasid Caliphate (1258).

In the first section, Uludağ mentions the conditions of the religious, scientific, political, and social atmosphere in which Ibn Taymiyya lived. Ibn Taymiyya, throughout his life, was committed to the Islamic community trying to solve the issues and challenges Muslims had to face in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. At the same time, he was also waging the war on innovations and superstitions that contaminated religious thoughts. However, this atti-

²Ibn Taymiyya: An Extraordinary Scholar and Thinker.

tude angered both Sufis and traditionally educated scholars, and this is the reason why Ibn Taymiyya's influence remained limited among the scholars of his time and many scholars of the following centuries (p.12).

He was actively involved in the resistance against the Mongols, while remaining within the sphere of Muslim scholarship, jurisprudence and theology, he wrote critiques against some Muslim scholars, philosophers, and non-Islamic faiths and ideas. Since the critical attitude expressed in his writings was directed towards several representative figures both at the juridical and political levels, he was put on trial and had to suffer throughout his life. For example, some Sufis, like 'AtāAllāh al-Iskandarī and Nasr al-dīnal-Manbijī, censured Ibn Taymiyya, and they were also actively involved in several attempts to get him imprisoned (p. 26-30).

As far as Sufism is concerned, according to Ibn Taymiyya, many of the schools of thought and Sufi orders degenerated due to the influence of philosophy, the Bātinī ideas, and social and political factors. On the theological side, he argued against both the Ash'arīs', challenging their approach to the divine attributes, and Sufis', by disputing their speculations about the oneness of God.

According to Uludağ, who dedicates a section of his book to the different aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's harsh criticism (p. 40-64) of both Ash'arite philosophy and Bātinīyya, Ibn Taymiyya's perspective could be approached as attachment to the ways of the *Salaf*. In fact, he, as one of the most faithful and devoted followers of the *Salaf*, considers the way of predecessors to be the only remedy for the corruption of the faith and, therefore, whatever he considers being incompatible with this way, he labels it as innovation.

Ibn Taymiyya is usually portrayed as an uncompromising enemy of *Tasawwuf*. The underlying reason for this

kind of perception is mainly due to his critical approach to Muhyī al-dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī and other similar Sufi masters and thinkers. Even though Ibn Taymiyya regards Ibn al-Arabi as a thinker not completely unrelated to Islam and its principles; he views him as a *Zindiq*, a term which could be loosely translated into English as "heretic". On the contrary, as far as Sadr al-dīn Qunawī, a famous follower of Ibn al-Arabi, is concerned, Ibn Taymiyya considers him, unlike Ibn al-‘Arabī, far away from Islam and its way. The author considers the attitude of Ibn Taymiyya both extreme and unnecessary and, consequently, criticizes him. Those, who are familiar with the works of Uludağ know that even though he criticizes *Tasawwuf* occasionally, he never fails to emphasize importance of "good and true *Tasawwuf*." Therefore, we can say that the author is consistent in his interpretation.

In relation to the sphere of jurisprudence, Ibn Taymiyya built his approach and issued *fatwas* based on the premise that there is harmony between human reason and the plain text of the sources pertaining to legal matters, as exemplified clearly in the case of the many juridical issues he discussed. Actually, Ibn Taymiyya, at one level applied rational methods in jurisprudence; and at the other level, he separated reason from the belief systems, following the way of the *Salaf*.

Though in *Fiqh*, Ibn Taimiyya followed the principles of the Hanbali school of law and issued *fatwas* accordingly,³ he didn't shy away from issuing *fatwas* independently, showing his insights as an independent scholar, as in the case of the invalidity of triple divorce in a single pronouncement, thus courting both controversy and persecution by the authorities of the time.

Ibn Taymiyya is a *sui generis* scholar. Even though his

³As an example, it can be quoted the Imam Ahmad' *Fatwa* that whoever eats camel meats needs to take ablution.

effect remained limited in the scholarly environment, some people and groups followed him with great respect. In Ibn Taymiyya's understanding a believer keeping away from sinful and immoral acts is not enough; he should actually also prevent others from doing things that are forbidden, as per Islamic law. And this proactive approach of Ibn Taymiyya, seen in some of his *fatwas*, along with following the ways of the *Salaf*, without taking into consideration of the circumstances, according to the author, have resulted in *fatwas* that are misused by fundamentalist elements.

In the second section of the book, which was previously published as a journal article in 1999,⁴ the author offers some reflections on the *Tasawwuf* in the light of the works of Muhāsibī, Ghazzālī, and Ibn Khaldun. For the author, *Tasawwuf* is a lifestyle based on asceticism and piety. The human soul, if it follows the real teaching of *Tasawwuf*, can attain peace and perfection through the remembrance of God, away from the worldly pleasures.

At the end of the section dedicated to Sufism, Uludağ briefly examines the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya about *Tasawwuf*. The author attempts to explain Sufi terminologies and concepts like sainthood, religious law (*Sharī'a*), prophecy (*Nubuwwa*), miracles of the saints (*Karāmāt*), unveiling (*Kashf*), gnosis (*Ma'rifa*), extinction in God (*Fanā'*), love (*Muhabba*), existence (*Wujūd*), unity (*Ittiād*), and incarnation (*Hulūl*). The author underlines that, while Ibn Taymiyya affirms the spiritual methods based on the religious law and the practices of the *Salaf*, he objects to innovated beliefs and practices integrated later into *Tasawwuf*.

The third section of the book entitled "The Problem of Logic in Ibn Taymiyya" begins with historical information concerning the role of logic in the early Islamic thought

⁴Süleyman Uludağ, "Tasavvuf Karşısı Akımlar ve İbn Taymiye'nin Tasavvuf Felsefesi" *İslamiyat* 3 (1999), 39-66.

and its impact on the Muslim scholars, who did not welcome the discipline. Until the time of Ghazzālī, Muslim scholars did not accept the Aristotelian logic in a significant way, as they were concerned about the intervention of philosophy in the *Ilāhiyāt* (theology). However, Ghazzālī lent support to the Aristotelian logic and integrated it into the Islamic sciences. In this manner, logic becomes a cornerstone in the Islamic sciences. Ibn Taymiyya, after realizing certain harmful and mistaken aspects of logic, wrote some tracts rejecting logic and its place in the Islamic sciences. Then, he emphasized that the correct path was to follow the way of *Salaf*.

Ibn Taymiyya has been one of the most influential, productive, and famous scholars in Islamic thought and history. Even though he did not establish a school of thought by his own, effect of his thought could be actually seen on many scholars. Therefore, works written about Ibn Taymiyya are crucial in understanding his ideas. In this context, it would be useful to read Jon Hoover's book too, in a comparative way, along with Uludağ's, thus helping us to understand the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyya from two different perspectives.

Uludağ's works offers us some good insights into Ibn Taymiyya's life and thoughts, and looking from this angle, it definitely contributes to our understanding of one of the most discussed and contested medieval Muslim thinkers whose life and messages have got a very deep contemporary presence. However, many subjective interpretations that we encounter in the book appear to challenge the objectivity of its assessments; nevertheless, as observed before, the book will definitely enhance the readers' understanding of Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts and works.

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Massimo Campanini, *Dante e l'Islam:
L'empireo delle luci*, Roma: Studium,
2019, 174 pp.

Gianni F. Trapletti

This year marks the seven hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri, the greatest Italian poet. In one of his last books, the internationally known Italian scholar of Islam, Massimo Campanini, discusses the issue of the supreme poet's debt to the Arab-Islamic culture, which represented an highly debated topic among Italian scholars in the previous century.

Campanini's contribution has to be considered within the framework of what he defines the "oblivion of Islam in the West", that is the centuries-old attitude of the European culture to systematically and knowingly ignore, deny and reject any kind of link with Islam. It is clear that the well-known historical events are at the origin of the radical antagonism that caused even armed conflicts.

However, wars could not completely delete the commercial, cultural and personal relationships between the exponents of both sides, even though some people are still questioning them. In 1957, delivering a speech at Johns Hopkins University, the historian Bernard Lewis introduced the locution "clash of civilisations", which, in the 1990s, Samuel P. Huntington reintroduced and dispersed in public debates. According to this perspective, the only manner in which the Western and the Islamic civilizations relate to each-other is the strife, because they are presumed to be mutually incompatible.

Conversely, Campanini notes that Islam shares the Abrahamic religious root and numerous cultural paradigms and patterns with Judaism and Christianity, till to the point that one may claim they all belong to one single Mediterranean civilization (while Asian Islam is quite different from Arab and Persian ones).

The first chapter of the book recalls and retraces the diffusion, circulation and sharing of the texts' translations from Arabic language into Latin among the European universities at the beginning of the second millennium of the Christian era. Toledo was an important centre for translations from Arabic and Hebrew, and so it was the court of Frederick II in Palermo. In fact, the essence of the philosophical and scientific heritage of the ancient Greece was recovered for the western culture through the mediation of the Arab-Muslim thought. In the late Middle Ages the writings of Ptolemy, Euclid, Galen, Aristotle, al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) were made available in Latin. The result was a cultural *oecumene* that spread from Oxford, Paris, Spain, Sicily to Egypt and Baghdad.

On the contrary, the works concerning Islamic theology were given a scarce attention and only rarely translated, so that Islam as a religion was less known, and it was primarily studied with the intent to confute it. Campanini is confident that Dante, who agreed with his countrymen's negative opinions about Islam, was, at the same time, educated by the cultural milieu that relied on crucial contributions from the Arabic sources. The *Convivio*,¹ *De Monar-*

¹“The Banquet.” Dante Alighieri, *Dante: Convivio, A Dual-Language Critical Edition*, trans. Andrew Frisardi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

chia,² and *La Divina Commedia*,³ disclose that Dante had a wide knowledge of the Islamic philosophy and sciences, even if he ignored the Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, along with Islamic theology.

In the second chapter, Campanini formulates his hypothesis about the genealogy of Dante's biographic and spiritual evolution. Although the author confesses to be a philosopher and not a philologist, he proves to be an accurate reader, a precise exegete of Dante's work. He is also well aware of the critical discussions concerning the poet. Moreover, Campanini clearly expresses his personal opinion even about issues that are still debated among the specialists. In an attempt to simplify, the author thinks (at the end of a "long meditation") that Dante's life may be divided into three main intellectual phases.

The first corresponds to Dante's adherence to the canons of the *Stilnovo* poetry and the most evident expression of that season is the prosimetrum *Vita nova*.⁴ In this period Alighieri is closely linked to his "best friend" Guido Cavalcanti. However, the two poets' successive poetical developments diverge. Dante considers the experience of love from a more spiritual point of view, and he assumes the prophetic mission of announcing an imminent moral and political palingenesis through the intervention of the evocative Greeyhound, the ideal imperator. The later narrative of the relationship with Beatrice may be regarded as the expression of an angel-like conception of love, which does not refer to a concrete person but to an idealised image in the memory. Campanini compares

²"On the Monarchy." *The De Monarchia of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Aurelia Henry (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904).

³Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2012).

⁴Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, trans. Mark Musa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Beatrice's image to the "gentile signora", the philosophy that consoles Dante (as intended by Boethius) when his young beloved dies in 1290. In the author's considerations the unfinished work *Convivio* is the result of Dante's platonising philosophical phase. Finally, after a period of existential bewilderment, the Florentine veers towards the Christian mystic and spirituality that he richly conveys in the *Divine Comedy*. There, Beatrice is transfigured and sublimated on the model of the Virgin Mary. Obviously, the three "cantiche" should not be interpreted only as a religious piece; they represent the apex of Dante's poetic art, political passion and cultural knowledge.

At this stage of his discourse, Campanini considers it necessary to temporarily interrupt Dante's analysis; and, in the third chapter, he illustrates the Arab-Islamic cultural heritage that informed the poet's time and that represents the basis of his cultural education. However, it has to be noted that often it is not possible to offer documentary evidences that demonstrate the direct descent of European cultural products from Arab antecedents.

Notwithstanding, the analogies, in content and form, unveil a symbiotic exchange between the two cultural environments. The famous *Dove's Neck Ring* (*Tawaq al-hamāma*) of Ibn Hazm from Cordova may be considered as the source of inspiration for the Provençal poetry, and probably also the precursor of some aspects of the Stilnovismo. Only a century ago, Miguel Asín Palacios suggested the recurrent elements that connect the *Comedy* to *The Night Journey of the Prophet* (*Al-Isra' wal-Mi'rāj*).⁵ More recently, it has been hypothesised that these elements derive from the Latin and the vulgar French versions of the book by Bonaventura da Siena. In the middle of the last century, the ancient narrative was recovered

⁵Miguel Asín Palacios, *La Escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia* (Madrid: E. Maestre, 1919)

from its French version by José Muñoz Sendino and from the Latin by Enrico Cerulli. The insightful philologist Maria Corti successfully retraced the relationship between Islamic texts and the Dantesque masterpiece, with internationally acclaimed results.

The debate, in which some discordant voices still exist, is described in 2012 by Valeria Pucciarelli in *Dante e l'Islam. La controversia sulle fonti escatologiche della Divina Commedia*. Nevertheless, Campanini claims that it is notably through the influence of the philosophical thought that it is possible to detect the presence of the Arab-Islamic culture in Dante. Incidentally, the Ambrosian scholar was the editor of the Italian editions and an acute interpreter of the works of the Arab authors he quotes. Numerous pages of the book are devoted to the great commentator of Aristotle, al-Fārābī, whose influence has been diffused through Avicenna. He conceives the perfect order of the cosmos as the emanation ("fayd") from God's superabundance, an order that has to be mirrored in the organisation of the virtuous city ruled by the Imam-philosopher, prophet-king. In this perspective, politics has got the role to guide human beings to blissfulness by attaining the intellectual perfection.

In *The Governance of the Solitary (Tadbīr al-Mutawāhhid)*⁶, Ibn Bājjā, the Andalusian thinker known in the Latin as Avempace, teaches that through contemplation the virtuous philosopher manages to attain bliss becoming one with the celestial intelligences, even in an imperfect society. Therefore, he can attain his aim by developing his rational abilities, by accomplishing the rectification of

⁶ *Tadbīr al-Mutawāhhid*, partial trans. Lawrence Berman, "The Governance of the Solitary", *Medieval Political Philosophy, A Source Book*, ed. Ralph Lerner-Muhsin Mahdi, (Toronto: The Free Press of Glencoe), 1963, 122–133. *Tadbīr al-mutawāhhid, bilingual edition, Arabic and Italian*, trans. Massimo Campanini, *Il regime del solitario* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2002).

society and by becoming the example and the guide for the common people.

Averroes's influence on Dante has been already deeply investigated⁷; here, Campanini retrieves his considerations about the possibility for the human intellect to draw from the separate intelligences and God. The Italian scholar regards Averroes's thought as the extreme outcome of the Arab-Islamic speculation not only in epistemology, but also in ethics and in politics.

The last chapter of Campanini's book aims to ascertain the paradigms on which Dante relied to orient himself while developing his own *Weltanschauung*. Dante's cosmology represents a hierarchical unified system that reflects a gradual continuity from God to the human intellect, the cosmos is organised into nine concentric spheres, from the *primum mobile* to the sublunary world. The spheres are moved by the angels or separated intelligences, who love God, who is Love himself. In this earthly condition, man aspires to be united with these entities by means of the loving tension that Dante defines "intellectual" in the *Convivio* and "celestial" in *Paradise*.

This cosmological conception, which represents a synthesis between Platonism and Aristotelianism, was systematised by al-Fārābī, Avicenna and Averroes, respectively. Campanini stresses that Dante was influenced by the ideas of these philosophers in defining his own intellectual horizon, even without having read their works directly. In order to demonstrate the validity of his assumption, the author reviews a precise series of Dante's quotations and passages that may confirm the existence of an intellectual *koiné* between the poet and the Muslim philosophers.

The comparison between the Greek-Arabic cosmology

⁷Alain de Libera-Jean-Baptiste Brenet et al., *Dante et l'averroïsme* (Collège de France-Belles Lettres: Paris, 2019).

and the theology of the *Comedy* (particularly of *Paradise*) makes it possible to detect Dante's specific position, wherever he introduces the typically Christian idea of the divine grace necessary to attain the beatitude. The poet is, in fact, impelled to cross the heavens to the Empyrean attracted by the love of God, not moved by the appetite of the intellect. But this aptitude, potentially fideist and irrationalist, is within the framework of the ordered cosmos described by Averroes; or, if we want to put in another way, that of Aristotle commented on by Averroes. The canticle that is supposed to prove Dante's achievement of Christian mysticism is, at the same time, filled with Greek-Arabic rationalist philosophy.

The culmination of the path is the description of the Trinity, which, in Dante is directly linked to cosmology. The poet affirms, in fact, the trinitarian unity of God by faith (*Paradise* XXIV, 130-141); and this clearly distances him from the Arab-Islamic thinkers. The description of God in the shape of lights can be compared to al-Ghazālī's philosophy of light, but the latter prevents a trinitarian elaboration; the flow of divine love, which can also be found in Greek-Arabic emanationism, does not presuppose a trinitarian subdivision.

According to Campanini, this would highlight the profound gap that separates Dante from the Arab-Islamic authors who also had an influence on him: while their proceeding is strictly rational, the man of letters is guided by a mystical afflatus, because reason would be powerless in grasping the core of the truth that conceals the mystery of God. In conclusion, the book cannot fail to emphasize Dante's ambivalent position: he seems to embrace Greek-Arabic-Islamic conceptions in his development of cosmology and politics; but he rejects them in his elaboration of the mystical theology of the *Comedy*.

This book by Massimo Campanini constitutes then a

segment, almost a case of study, of the broader research the scholar was conducting and should be read alongside with *L'Islam religione dell'Occidente*⁸ and *I giorni di Dio*.⁹ Last October, his sudden death interrupted his earthly investigation, but others will be able to continue the quest taking inspiration from the substantial contributions he left.

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⁸Massimo Campanini, *L'Islam religione dell'Occidente*(Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2016).

⁹Massimo Campanini, *I giorni di Dio* (Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2019).

**Alaa Al-Din Arafat, *Egypt in Crisis: The
Fall of Islamism and Prospects of Democratization*,
London: Palgrave Macmillan,
2018, xv+295 pp.**

Muammer İskenderoğlu

In the modern world, it seems that Muslim societies are not capable to achieve any kind of stabilization or balance, be it social, political or economic. The representatives of different ideologies, although appear to be hostile to one another and engaged in a perpetual conflictual relation, in reality share the same inadequacy and attitude while imposing their ideologies to their respective societies. This sort of imposition seems to be extremely dangerous for the political stability of their respective countries, leading them actually to a long chain of disasters.

In this context, Turkey, Iran and Egypt -three countries endowed with a certain degree of modern standards' constitutional tradition- must be taken as study cases, while the cause of these disasters and the way out of them should be subject to serious evaluation and study. In the present book, Alaa al-Din Arafat examines Egypt's recent history and gives a portrait of what the representatives of different ideologies, from secular to Islamist, offered and presented to Egyptian society.

Arafat's book consists of seven main chapters and an epilogue. In his first introductory chapter, the author describes the historical periods of Egypt's democratization process with a special reference to the waves of democra-

tization in other parts of the world. He clearly states that Middle East today is a region where democracy is at the lowest level respect to the rest of the world. From a general point of view, the majority of the countries have, in fact, autocratic regimes and, in the specific, the Arab world seems to have resisted to all the waves of democratization in different phases of the world history. Now, focusing the attention on the situation of Egypt in particular, it seems that, since 1866, the democratization process took, at the same time, one step forward and one step backward, while the current situation is not at all promising. Arafat's analysis actually points to the following main consideration: since the first wave of democratization, among the political emerging groups and parties, from general public to liberals and leftists, and later Islamists, none of them prioritized democracy as an aim and a goal of their policy and activism. Moreover, the Islamists opposed democracy. In the following waves of democratization, the situation did not improve: Egyptian society gave priority to social justice over democracy, liberals and leftists were neutralized by the colonial pressures, while the military took anti-democratic stands -in reason of its basic attitudes- and the Islamists regarded democracy both as un-Islamic and as a threat.

According to Arafat, the Egyptian military played a significant role in the overthrow of Mubarak, thanks to its institutional autonomy, actually ending the aspiration of his son's succeeding plans, namely Gamal Mubarak, whose economic reform plans could threaten the military's economic interests.

After Mubarak, the army managed to divide and neutralize the supporters of democracy by forming an informal alliance with the Islamists, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood. What unites the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafists and the military is that they are interested in

who will rule Egypt, not how it can be transformed into a liberal democracy. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood, who waited some eighty years to come to power, showed that they did not have the competence to rule Egypt when they found themselves at the government. According to the author the main reason of both this attitude and inability is the anti-democratic feature of Islamists' political strategy and creed.

In the following four chapters, Arafat examines the Islamists' journey to and their abrupt fall from power. In the second chapter, especially, the author describes how Morsi, after coming to power, angered different segments of Egyptian society with his exclusionist policies that, in the end, triggered the process, which leads to the isolation of the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead of bringing together different political groups with inclusive policies, Morsi believed that only the Muslim Brotherhood has the right to rule Egypt. Again, instead of reforming the old state's official institutions, he only initiated the plan for its "Brotherhoodization". For Arafat, the exclusionist tendency of the Qutbist faction, which dominated the administration of the Muslim Brotherhood, is the main reason for its fall from the power. This faction was behind the "Brotherhoodization" plan, the use of violence against the opposition, and the anti-freedom policies and Morsi's regulations and laws that actually restricted the rights of Egyptian people. In an attempt to control the state institutions, the Muslim Brotherhood applied the tactics of Mubarak's party but, while the latter appointed to the posts people with skills and experience, the Muslim Brotherhood, who did not have such persons, choose those with whom they had personal, commercial or mutual relations.

Arafat describes how the Muslim Brotherhood show the tendency to justify, from a purely religious point of view, what they had previously opposed for the same rea-

son. For example, when both Sadat and Mubarak sought help from the IMF, they considered it haram, but when Morsi received it, they considered it halal by redefining the interest as administrative fees. However, in all cases, all the economic policies of the Muslim Brotherhood were doomed to failure. The most important reason of this was that they were not considered reliable partners by the Egyptian business community. For Arafat, the personal freedom under Morsi fell into the lowest level after the Nasser regime and that even worsened more after Morsi's removal from power. Generally speaking, during his brief government, human rights in Egypt declined rather than progressed, delaying, at the same time, also the general democratization of Egypt.

In the third chapter, Arafat first explains the relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist Group, which turned from secret enmity to short-term partnership motivated by mutual interest and then again to open hostility, later. The Salafists, in fact, gave a great contribution to the removal of Muslim Brotherhood from power and, according to the author, their purpose was to exploit through opportunism the popular anger against the Muslim Brotherhood and to take over their functional role in the Egyptian regime. However, their political survival is not guaranteed and it seems difficult for them to find the same support in the future. The main elements of Mubarak's deep state were the military and the security apparatus. Actually, they had reached the lowest credibility before the Morsi rule, so there was a good opportunity to start a serious reform on this regard. But instead of beginning a serious and incisive reform, Morsi tried unsuccessfully to control them. Actually, the failure in reforming and controlling the deep state gave them the opportunity to regain popularity.

In the fourth chapter, Arafat examines the relation-

ship between civil authority and the military in between the two revolutions. Actually, by weakening the opposition forces, the Muslim Brotherhood paved the way for the revival of the military's central role in politics. Thanks to the overlapping aims of the Islamists and the military, the former won the parliamentary majority and the presidency, while the military continued to increase its privileges. Removing Morsi from power was, in fact, against the interest of the military, because the Muslim Brotherhood gave exceptional economic and political concessions to their members.

In the fifth chapter, Arafat describes the process leading to the Islamists' fall from power. As a result of Morsi's policies, the Salafists and the other opposition forces turned against him and, with the military intervention, he was removed from power. Later, the Muslim Brotherhood, pretending to be the victim, tried to precipitate Egypt into a civil war, but could not succeed and as a result became a terrorist group in the eyes of public opinion and were declared so by the provisional government. For Arafat, the beginning of the fall of Morsi could be attributed to his constitutional declaration issued at the end of 2012. Actually, Morsi places himself in the position of both the sole legislator and the chief executive, monopolizing the power with an attempt that no king or president had ever tried before, for almost two hundred years.

Arafat, for the sake of completeness, discusses also the debates on whether the removal of Morsi could be characterized as coup or not. Leaving aside these debates, a number of reasons for the fall of Muslim Brotherhood from power are given. The failure of Muslim Brotherhood's government could be actually reconducted to the marginalization of group's pragmatist politicians by the Qutbist faction, ideological struggle between them and the other groups along with the lack of dialogue, the use

of violence against the protesters, their alliance with the extremist groups, their sectarian behaviour against the Coptic Christians and the Shia Muslims, their adoption of the policy of the Mubarak regime, Morsi's failure to respond to the demands of the people, and the USA's support of Morsi regime and Muslim Brotherhood's coming into conflict with almost every segment of Egyptian society. For Arafat, Muslim Brotherhood does not seem to have a role in Egyptian politics in the near future, but if they make serious revision in their ideology and critically evaluate their mistakes, in the long run they will return to the political arena and play an important role.

In the sixth chapter, Arafat examines El-Sisi's period. He emphasizes that 2014 constitution is not substantially different from that of 2012, but contains significant progress in public and private freedoms, civil and socioeconomic rights and religion-state relations. For Arafat, El-Sisi is an enormously talented, manipulative and highly politicized officer who saved the military and the deep state from potential destruction. But under El-Sisi, the Egyptian economy has deteriorated further and the country has moved further away from being a state of law. El-Sisi has great issues in areas such as foreign policy, economy, and most of all democratization. El-Sisi, in fact, who does not think very differently from the Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood, will not lead Egypt to a democratic process.

In the seventh chapter, Arafat examines the civil-military relations in Pakistan, Indonesia, Portugal, Spain, Latin America and Turkey, in order to think and reflect on how Egyptian democratization process could actually benefit from their examples.

In the epilogue, Arafat states that Egypt can be defined as a destabilized hybrid regime and make some suggestions to get out of this situation. First of all, Egypt needs economic reform, along with strengthening the political parties, developing a civil society, finding external support for democratic

transition, redefining the civil-military and state-religion relations and establishing both the rule of law and constitutionalism. In this context, the author emphasizes that, even when EU and USA are morally obliged to help Egypt along the process of democ-ratization, it is quite improbable that, due the previously discussed premises, the democratization, intended as the main aim of Egyptian policy making, will be attained with external support, as those who see western interventions in the Muslim world as the biggest obstacle to democra-tization sustain.

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